



IDAHO EMPLOYMENT

Along the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes

Volume 20.7

Idaho Department of Labor

July 2008 Issue / May 2008 Data

C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER, GOVERNOR

ROGER B. MADSEN, DIRECTOR

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IDAHO JOB GROWTH CONTINUES SLOWDOWN IN MAY AND JUNE

The continued slowing of economic activity in Idaho checked nonfarm job growth from May to June across industry sectors. While most private industry sectors picked up the number of jobs typical for late spring over the last five years, overall economic weakness pushed total nonfarm employment for June below June 2007, the first month since the fall of 2001 that nonfarm employment has slipped below year-earlier levels.

From May to June, the state economy added 7,900 nonfarm jobs, a 1.2 percent increase compared to the five-year average increase of 1.39 percent. That followed the addition of 7,800 jobs from April to May, a 1.12 percent increase but again short of the five-year-average of 1.27 percent.

This persistent weakness left the economy with 2,600 fewer jobs in June than a year before, a 0.39 percent decline on top of a fractional 0.11 percent drop in May from May 2007.

Natural resources grew 13.75 percent from May to June on top of 15.45 percent growth from April to May. Growth from April to May was below the five-year-average of 16.05 percent, but for June growth was slightly higher than the 13.64 percent five-year-average. The year-over-year growth rates are only slightly lower – 9.37 percent for May and 10.47 percent for June. The five-year-average for June is only 7.51 percent. High prices for raw goods and the increase in exports due to the weak dollar have fueled growth in this sector.

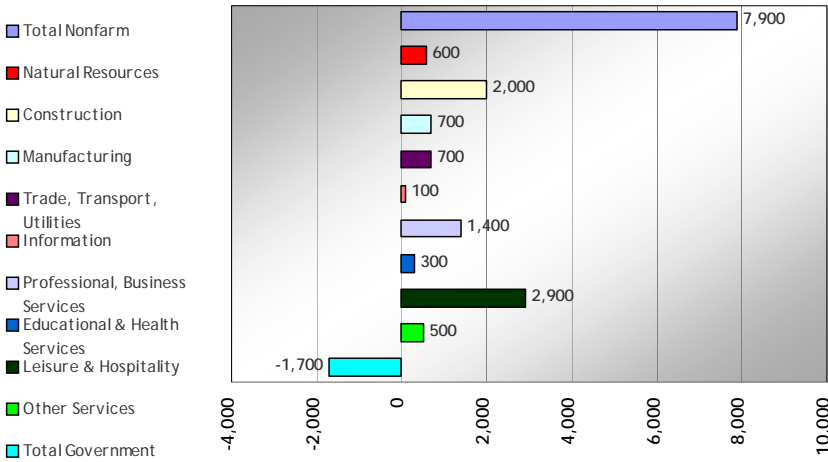
But the major goods-producing sectors of construction and manufacturing were dramatically below employment levels of the previous two years. In May construction was off 8.82 percent from May 2007 while manufacturing was down 6.70 percent from a year earlier. June offered no relief. Construction was down 8.73 percent, and manufacturing was 6.28 percent lower than a year earlier.

The month-to-month performance shows weaker than normal spring to summer seasonal increases in construction. May's growth of 2.63 percent was just two-thirds of the five-year average, and the increase in June of 4.03 percent fell just short of the 4.84 percent average. Despite the year-over-year job losses, the modest month-to-month gains are encouraging in the face of current conditions in the housing and credit markets.

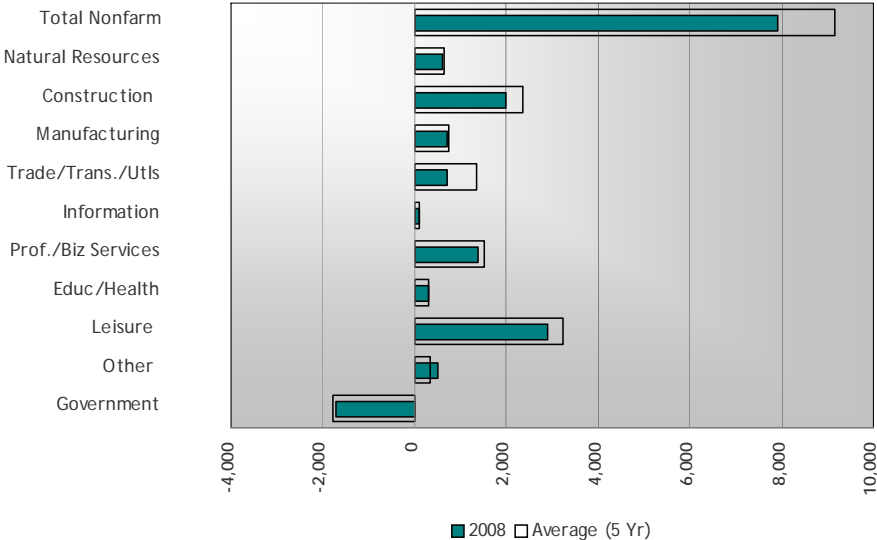
Manufacturing employment has typically been stable in the spring compared to the previous year so the significant declines in 2008 marked the first severe weakness since 2003. Month to month, the 0.30 percent loss of jobs from April to May was partially muted by a 1.18 percent increase in employment, moving close to the five-year average. But the addition of 700 jobs in June was largely due to seasonal increases in the nondurable goods subsector of manufacturing. Given the industry's decline over the past 12 months and the high average wages that went with those lost jobs, this sector warrants close attention for the foreseeable future.

Trade, transportation and utilities were up 0.31 percent in May but down 0.61 percent in June compared to a year earlier. Over the past five years this sector posted average 2.88 percent gains in May and 2.79 percent gains in

Graph 1: May to June 2008 Changes in Nonfarm Employment by Industry



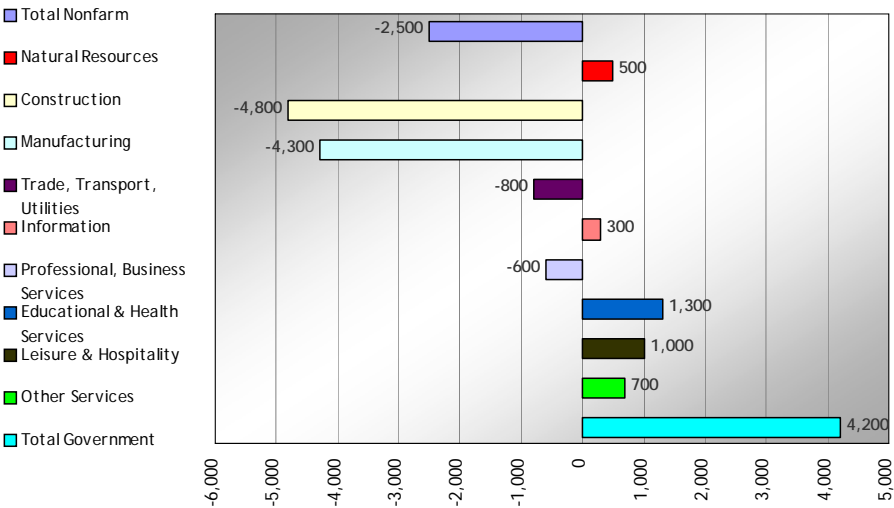
Graph 2: May to June 2008 Change in Nonfarm Employment Compared to 5-Year Average



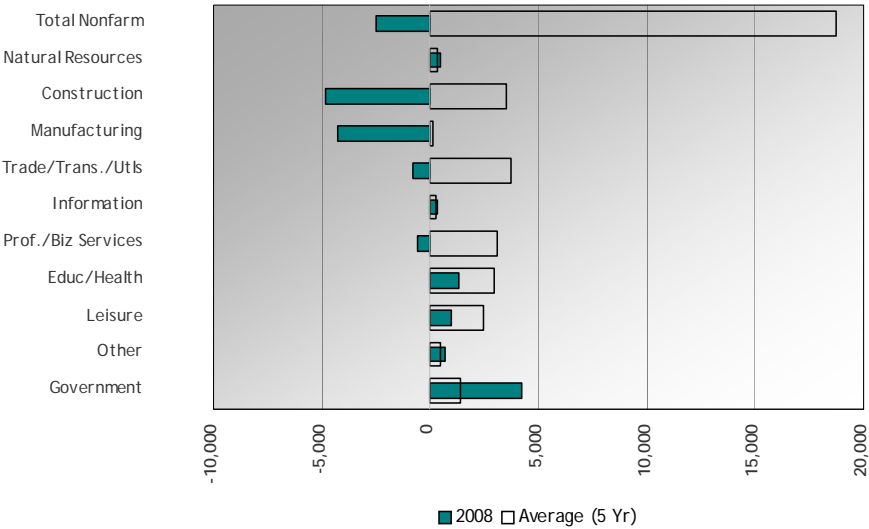
June. Month to month, this sector grew at just 0.79 percent in May and slowed to 0.48 percent in June. Typically the sector picks up jobs in May and June at 1 percent each month.

Professional and business services posted near-average growth for May and June of around 1.5 percent, but like construction and manufacturing, jobs in professional and businesses services dropped 0.32 percent below a year earlier in May and 0.53 percent below in June.

Graph 3: June 2007 to June 2008 Changes in Nonfarm Employment by Industry



Graph 4: June 2007 to June 2008 Change in Nonfarm Employment Compared to 5-Year Average



IDAHO’S SECOND QUARTER EMPLOYMENT DROPS IN KEY INDUSTRIES

Idaho’s economy continued to weaken during the second quarter of 2008, according to nonfarm payroll employment figures. Idaho’s total average non-farm employment for the April-June quarter increased 19,400 from the first quarter to 659,100.

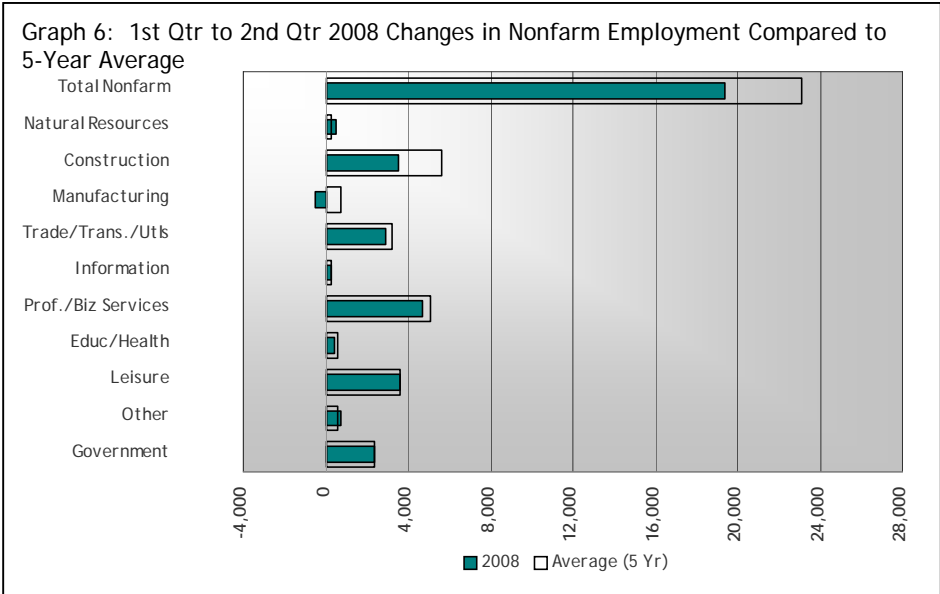
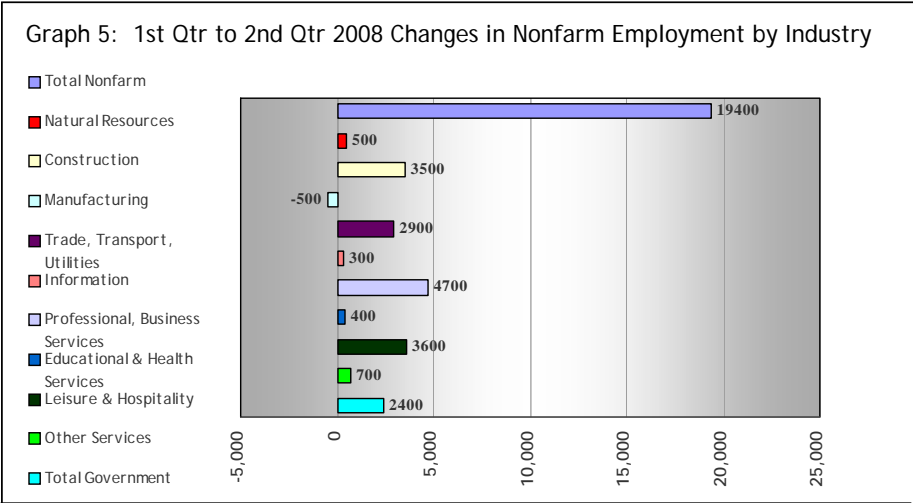
Nonfarm employment changes from the first to second quarters in 2008 were close to the average changes over the past five years for most sectors. The exceptions were construction, which grew only 7.87 percent compared to the average of 13.61 percent, and manufacturing, which declined 0.74 percent against a five-year average growth of 1.12 percent. Manufacturing was the only

industry to lose jobs from the first quarter, which raises significant concerns since historically manufacturing workers have the highest earning potential in Idaho.

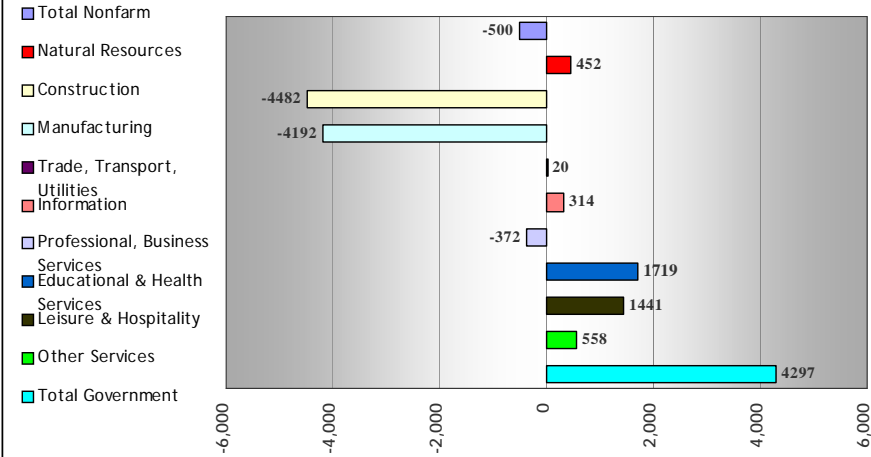
The year-over-year comparison for the second quarter is more dramatic. Total April-June nonfarm employment was 0.08 percent lower in 2008 from 2007. Natural resources, information, leisure, other services, education and health services and government were all near or above the average growth levels. Trade, transportation and utilities experienced no growth for the second quarter, the weakest year-over-year second quarter for that sector since a half-point decline in 2003. Professional and business services had a similar experience, posting a decline of 0.31 percent compared to its five-year average growth of 3.65 percent. It was the sector's first negative second quarter compared to a year earlier since before 1990 when the existing statistical system was established.

Construction and manufacturing fell the furthest into negative territory. The 4,500 fewer construction jobs this spring than last translates into an 8.22 percent drop when the five-year average was a 4.65 percent increase. Manufacturing's 6.28 percent job loss, a decline of 4,200 jobs was not as dramatic since the five-year average has been no growth year over year in the second quarter. The first half of 2008 is closely tracking manufacturing's employment experience in 2003, which ended the year with a 3.8 percent decline. (See more tables on following page).

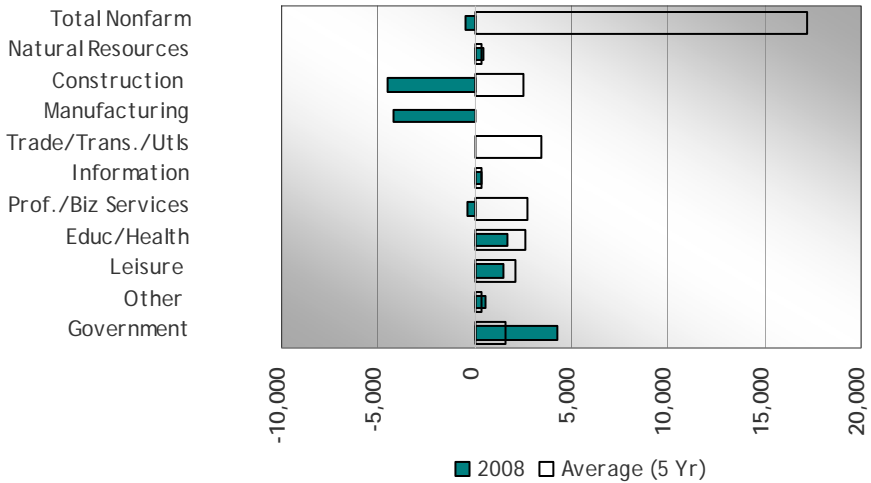
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Graph 7: 2nd Qtr 2007 to 2nd Qtr 2008 Changes in Nonfarm Employment



Graph 8: 2nd Qtr 2007 to 2nd Qtr 2008 Changes in Nonfarm Employment Compared to 5-Year Average



BUSINESS EMPLOYMENT DYNAMICS REFLECT ECONOMIC DOWNTURN THIRD QUARTER 2007

New figures are providing more evidence that Idaho's economy – along with the nation's – was contracting at a much higher rate than previously believed in 2007.

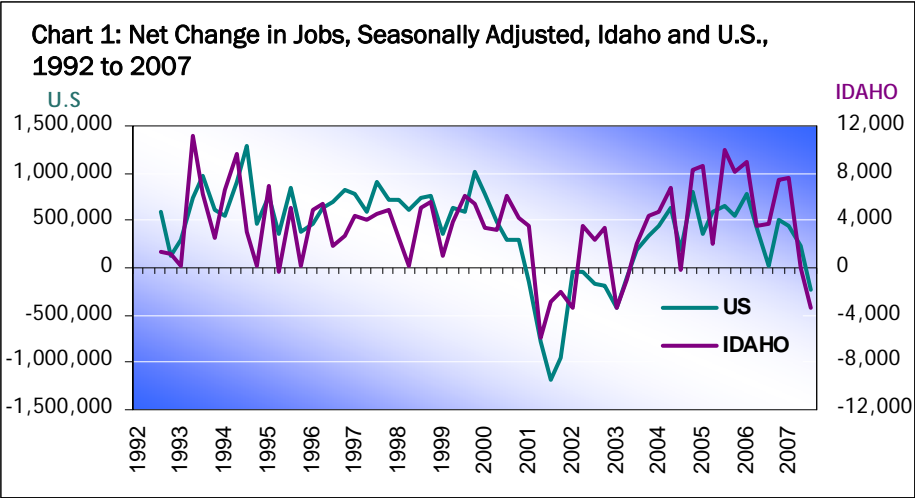
The new Business Employment Dynamic figures from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics record job gains from new and expanding private businesses and job losses from closed or contracting businesses. Idaho experienced the largest net job loss for the July-September quarter in the last 16 years. There were two other negative third quarters – during the 2001 recession and the summer of 2004.

Seasonally adjusted, new and expanding Idaho businesses created 41,792 jobs in 2007's third quarter while 45,176 jobs disappeared with closing or contracting businesses. That was a net loss of nearly 3,400. In the second quarter Idaho posted a net job loss of 78.

At the same time, the national economy lost 235,000 jobs. Payrolls grew by 7.2 million from new and expanding business adding 7.2 million jobs during the summer quarter in 2007 while closing and contracting business dropped 7.5 million from payrolls.

Business Employment Dynamics represent the change in the number of jobs over time, which is the net result of increases and decreases in employment that occur at all businesses in the economy.

Chart 1 illustrates this ever-changing dynamic, comparing Idaho trends to national trends. Analyzing state and national data shows the net change in jobs is sensitive to the business cycle. There were more losses than gains during the 2001 recession nationally and in Idaho. According to the data, Idaho's payrolls for the third quarter of 2007 dropped over 500 jobs more than during the third quarter of 2001, which had been the previous record third-quarter job loss.



Source: BED/ Bureau of Labor Statistics

Breaking down gross job gains and losses by sector for the nation, education and health services led the way with a net gain of 113,000 jobs. Wholesale trade followed at 2,000 and utilities gained 1,000.

At the other end, there were 12 major industries losing at least 2,000 jobs. The goods producing sector showed the highest net loss of 217,000 jobs over the quarter. The construction sector shed 107,000 jobs, manufacturing 97,000, and retail trade 59,000. This was the first time since 2001 that financial activities reported net jobs losses in consecutive quarters. It posted a decline of 62,000 jobs last summer on top of 31,000 in the spring quarter. Net job losses in financial services were recorded for the final half of 2001.

Job gains and losses by sector for Idaho are not available.

Nationally Wyoming had the highest gross job gain at 9.8 percent in the third quarter 2007 followed by Alaska at 9.4 percent, Montana with 8.1 percent and Colorado at 7.7 percent. Idaho tied with Maine and Vermont in fifth place at 7.6 percent gross increase in jobs. The slowest growing states were Hawaii at 5.1 percent and Illinois at 5.3 percent.

On the job loss side, Illinois and Pennsylvania tied for the lowest rate of gross job losses at 5.7 percent with Arkansas, Connecticut, Nebraska and Texas following at 5.8 percent each. Alaska at 11.1 percent, Virgin Islands at 9.8 percent, Wyoming at 9.1 and Idaho, tied with Montana at 8.2 percent, had the highest job loss rates. It was that one tenth of a percentage point difference that translated into a net loss of nearly 3,400 jobs in Idaho.

While Chart 2 shows the Idaho economy slowing down in comparison to previous quarters, the labor market was still strong although job gains and job losses during third quarter of 2007 indicated that Idaho's economic growth was trending down.

Chart 2. Gross Job Gains and Losses, Seasonally Adjusted, Idaho 1992 to 2007

The chart displays two data series: Job Gains (teal line) and Job Losses (purple line). The Y-axis represents the number of jobs, ranging from 20,000 to 50,000 in increments of 5,000. The X-axis represents the years from 1992 to 2007. Job Gains generally trend upwards, starting around 35,000 in 1992, dipping to a low of approximately 28,000 in 1993, and then rising to a peak of nearly 48,000 in 2001. Job Losses also trend upwards, starting around 34,000 in 1992, dipping to a low of approximately 28,000 in 1993, and then rising to a peak of nearly 48,000 in 2003. Both series show a significant dip around 2003, with Job Gains falling to approximately 38,000 and Job Losses to approximately 35,000. Both series end around 42,000 in 2007.

Year	Job Gains	Job Losses
1992	35,000	34,000
1993	28,000	28,000
1994	36,000	30,000
1995	38,000	35,000
1996	38,000	35,000
1997	39,000	35,000
1998	41,000	38,000
1999	42,000	36,000
2000	42,000	38,000
2001	47,000	42,000
2002	40,000	42,000
2003	38,000	35,000
2004	44,000	38,000
2005	45,000	38,000
2006	47,000	42,000
2007	42,000	42,000

For more information on the Business Employment Dynamics series, go online at www.bls.gov/bdm/.

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Idaho's slowing economy is being reflected in the dramatic increase over the past year in unemployment insurance claims. Over 8,000 more people were unemployed in June than a year earlier, up from the 7,000 additional jobless workers in May. The unemployment rate was over a full percentage point higher than a year ago.

The increased activity is putting pressure on the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund, which is undergoing its first serious test since the employer tax and worker benefit system underwent a major overhaul in 2005.

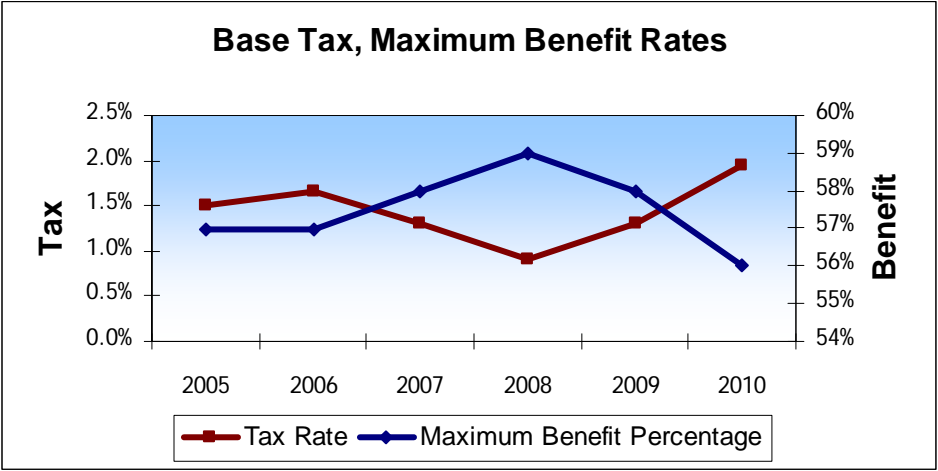
But the period of declining tax rates and rising benefit levels will be changing in 2009 and beyond because of the dramatic slowdown in home construction, which is the primary reason Idaho had about 4,500 fewer construction jobs this spring than last, and manufacturing shed 4,200 over the past year, particularly in the high-tech sector.

In exchange, however, the tax rate and benefit formulas were drastically changed to react more quickly and more aggressively to changing economic conditions. The new target balance for the fund already assumes that future economic slowdowns will only be 80 percent as bad as the worst ones of the last 20 years and not even close to the situation Idaho faced in the early and mid-1980s.

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economy is growing – as it has the past two years – and just as quickly raises rates and reins in benefits when the economy slows – as it is doing now.

The new formula for employer tax rates was phased in over three years so that 2007 was the first year it was fully effective. Two years earlier, department analysts estimated that the base tax rate would be between 1.2 percent and 1.3 percent for 2007. That estimate was adjusted up and down slightly over the ensuing 18 months as economic forecasts were revised and came more and more in line with actuality.



The rate set by the formula for 2007 was 1.302 percent, down from the 1.67 rate set as part of the phase-in process. This rate is assessed against the first \$32,200 paid to each employee.

In March 2006, Department of Labor analysts estimated the 2008 base tax rate at 0.869 percent. Again, the estimate was revised slightly up and down over the next 18 months. The rate was set by the formula at 0.918 percent for 2008.

Since that rate was set last fall, further reducing employer payments into the trust fund this year, the economy has weakened and benefits being paid out of the fund have jumped dramatically. Employers will pay about \$100 million into the trust fund while idled workers will take \$159 million out in weekly benefit payments.

That kind of decline in the fund balance triggers higher taxes and checks increases in benefits.

The most recent assessment for the next two years was in May and puts the base tax rate at 1.31 percent in 2009 and at 1.95 percent in 2010. That will substantially increase revenue to cover rising claims and restore stability to the fund by raising the balance back to the operating target level.

Department estimates of future base tax rates depend on how the economy and labor force fluctuate and are only as good as the operative economic forecast at the time the estimates are made. When department analysts know the wage, employment and claims outcomes, they can exactly determine the tax rate since the rates are set by the legislated formula. The wage and claims data is actual – no longer estimated – when the rate is formally set in the fall before the affected year.

The other component is benefits, and escalating claims that cut into the trust fund balance inherently focus attention on benefit levels, which are tied to job earnings.

Using the Bureau of Labor Statistics figures for average weekly wage, Idaho's average weekly wage of \$626.54 in 2006 ranked 46th nationally. But when using the Bureau of Economic Analysis income figures for 2006, Idaho per capita income of \$575.38 ranked 45th and per capita weekly earnings – wages, salaries and proprietors income only – of \$385.75 ranked 44th.

The state's average weekly benefit for 2006 was \$239.42, which ranked 36th among the states.

That means that on average, the unemployment benefit replaced about 38 percent of the weekly wage to rank 14th nationally, 42 percent of per capita weekly income to rank 17th nationally and 62 percent of per capita weekly earnings to rank 18th. That is often referred to as the replacement rate. Because wages rank so low in Idaho, even Idaho's relatively low average benefit results in a comparatively high replacement rate.

The federal poverty level for a family of three in 2006 was \$319 a week.

The 2006 figures are the most recent available for all states on average unemployment benefit, limiting any comparisons to that year or earlier.

To provide some context and assess the impact of the 2005 legislation overhauling the program, Idaho's ranking among the states went down for benefits and up for income after the new legislation took effect.

In 2003, Idaho's average weekly wage of \$544 ranked 47th nationally while per capita income at \$490.85 and per capita earnings at \$329 both ranked 46th, all one to two places lower than the 2006 rankings.

At the same time, the state's average unemployment benefit of \$231 ranked 34th, two places higher than in 2006. The earnings replacement rate was nearly 43 percent of the weekly wage to rank eighth, 47 percent of per capita weekly earnings to rank 15th and 70 percent of per capita weekly income to rank 11th – again all higher than in 2006.

The average weekly benefit went up less than 3.5 percent from 2003 to 2006, an increase that ranked 31st nationally. The maximum weekly benefit went from \$320 in 2003 to \$322 in 2006.

The maximum benefit had been 60 percent of Idaho's average weekly wage since 1973. The 2005 law kept 60 percent possible but under the formula generally pegs the maximum weekly benefit at something less. It was 57 percent in both 2005 and 2006.

The maximum benefit formula is on a sliding scale so that as employer tax rates decline, the top benefit rises, and as tax rates rise, the top benefit is reined in. In both 2005 and 2006, the tax rate was set by the new law, rising each year from the previous one so the maximum benefit dropped from 60 percent to 57 percent.

When the tax rate began to float on the formula, it came down in 2007, and the maximum benefit calculation moved to 58 percent of the average weekly wage. That point-higher calculation combined with rising wages as the labor pool contracted put the maximum benefit at \$338 for 2007. The further decline in tax rates lifted the benefit calculation to 59 percent in 2008 and again combined with rising wages to set the maximum benefit at \$364.

The base tax rate and all tax rates except the maximum dropped 22 percent in 2007 and 30 percent in 2008.

Had the maximum weekly benefit been pegged at 60 percent of the average annual wage as it had been for the previous 30 years, it would have been \$339 in 2005 and 2006, \$349 in 2007 and \$370 this year.

With tax rates forecast to rise over the next two years, the maximum weekly benefit level will be going down as the formula dictates. It will fall to 58 percent of the average weekly wage in 2009 and 56 percent in 2010, where it will likely remain for several years.

It is the combination of these rising tax rates and falling maximum benefit levels that rebuild the trust fund to its target level by increasing revenue and limiting payouts.

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NAVIGATOR PROGRAM PROMOTES HIRING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Guest Article by Beth Larson, Disability Program Navigator, Pocatello

Nearly 24 million working-age Americans, over 100,000 of them in Idaho, have some sort of disability. They are considered the nation's largest minority, and in most cases its largest untapped pool of skilled labor.

Too often employers do not know where to go to hire people with disabilities, and they are unaware of the resources available to assist them. At the same time, many people with disabilities do not realize what jobs they can do or how they can obtain the skills or training that will qualify them for those jobs.

Often disabled people are not aware of their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act or the programs available to help them find work. That's why the disabled are half as likely to be employed as people without disabilities.

The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey found that in 2006 only 40 percent of disabled men between 16 and 64 had jobs nationally compared to 81 percent of men without disabilities. In Idaho, only 43 percent of working age men with disabilities were employed compared to 84 percent of men without disabilities.

The difference among women was similar. About 69 percent of women without disabilities nationally had jobs compared to just 34 percent of women who were disabled. Among Idaho women, 38 percent of the disabled were working compared to 69 percent of women without disabilities.

Table 1: Americans With Disabilities Data, 2006								
Total Pop Ages 16-64	United States				Idaho			
	193,568,216		100		930,511		100	
	Not Disabled	%	Disabled	%	Not Disabled	%	Disabled	%
Total By Disability	169,705,119	88	23,863,097	12	811,371	87	119,140	13
Men	83,771,695	49	11,750,311	49	406,290	50	61,961	52
Employed	67,948,831	81	4,724,321	40	341093	84	27166	43
Not employed	15,822,864	19	7,025,990	60	65,197	16	34,795	57
Women	85,933,424	51	12,112,786	51	405,081	50	57,179	48
Employed	59,438,177	69	4,144,242	34	278,935	69	21,557	38
Not employed	26,495,247	31	7,968,544	66	126,146	31	35,622	62

Source: 2006 American Community Survey

Efforts by economic developers to continue economic expansion have focused new attention on this unused source of workers as those without jobs in the traditional labor force dwindled. Employers are finding that hiring disabled workers contributes to higher employee retention rates and lower turnover. They get workers with insight into market development and expansion for products with special value to the disabled. Additionally, these employers may qualify for training programs and tax incentives that benefit their bottom lines.

Despite their number, many of the programs to assist employers who hire people with disabilities are underused if used at all because they are difficult to understand and can be frustrating. The Disability Program Navigator was established by the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Social Security Administration to help employers connect with disabled workers. Navigators with the Idaho Department of Labor help people with disabilities "navigate"

through the challenges of obtaining and retaining employment. They also work to ensure a friendly, approachable environment where individuals with disabilities can ask for job assistance and receive the support they need.

Today Idaho’s eight navigators are among 500 located in 45 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. They provide one-stop services and employment information to all job seekers and employers. More information is available on the Idaho Department of Labor Web site labor.idaho.gov under the Publications link.

Idaho’s Disability Program Navigators are:

Region	Navigator	Contact Information
Northern Idaho	Susan Fauntleroy	Coeur d’Alene Labor office (208) 769-1558 ext. 3996.
North Central Idaho	Misti Sullivan	Lewiston Labor office (208) 799-5000 ext. 3534
North Central Idaho	Melisa Bryant	Grangeville Labor office (208) 983-0440 ext. 3791
Southwestern Idaho	Jeffery Tesch	Caldwell Labor office (208) 364-7781 ext. 3776
Southwestern Idaho	Julie Sherry	Boise Labor office (208) 364-7785 ext. 3440
South Central Idaho	Misti Sullivan	Magic Valley Labor office (208) 735-2500 ext. 3654
Southeastern Idaho	Beth Larson	Pocatello Labor office (208) 236 6710 ext. 3504
Eastern Idaho	Wendy Melgaard	Idaho Falls Labor office (208) 557-2500 ext. 3053



PUBLIC MEETING — HOW CAN IDAHO’S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM BE IMPROVED?

Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter and the Idaho Transportation Board have scheduled a series of public meetings about the condition of Idaho’s highway system and the additional \$240 million needed each year to maintain and improve roadways. The public will have an opportunity to share concerns.

Each meeting is from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on the dates and locations in the table below. For more information, contact the Idaho Transportation Department Office of Communications at (208) 334-8005.

Date	City	Location
July 14	Caldwell	The College of Idaho, Simplot Dining Room
July 16	Coeur d’Alene	Best Western Coeur d’Alene Inn
July 17	Lewiston	Red Lion Hotel
July 22	Idaho Falls	The Shilo Inn Suites Hotel
July 23	Pocatello	Red Lion Hotel
July 24	Twin Falls	Red Lion Hotel Canyon Springs



Area and County Developments

PANHANDLE

Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai & Shoshone counties

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

BENEWAH COUNTY

- Stimson Lumber Co., which purchased Benewah County's third largest mill last year, recently purchased its second largest. On July 1, Stimson became the new owner of the Regulus Stud Mill, a 49-year-old mill that employs 100 people in St. Maries. Last summer, Stimson purchased Plummer Forest Products, a mill currently employing about 50 people. Portland-based Stimson Lumber purchased the three Idaho Forest Industries mills in Coeur d'Alene and Priest River in 2000. In 2005, it closed one of the Coeur d'Alene mills, and this spring it closed the other. Stimson continues to operate the Priest River mill although with a much smaller crew. In 2004, it bought a remanufacturing mill in Hauser near Post Falls. Regulus opened a new state-of-the-art mill in late 2006 next to the mill it just sold.
- Valley Vista, a nonprofit company that is one of Benewah County's largest employers, recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. It was created in June 1988 to take over operation of the nursing home in St. Maries. Ten years later, it expanded by purchasing a nursing home in Rupert. Within two years, it added facilities in Mackay, Darlington and Sandpoint. In 2001, it completed an important remodel of its St. Maries and Sandpoint facilities, adding new therapy centers and expanding its behavior care program, the center's most ambitious undertaking. Valley Vista employs about 180 people in St. Maries and another 180 people at its other locations. Valley Vista has won the prestigious L. Jean Schoonover Excellence in Caring Award seven times. The award is given for outstanding quality of care to the top 10 percent of nursing homes in the state.
- Curtis and Yvette Benham are transforming seven units of their St. Maries apartment complex into extended stay suites. St. Maries does not have enough accommodations for visitors, and many visitors during hunting season or summer festivals have to take lodging in the Coeur d'Alene area, an hour's drive away. The Riverfront Suites will include kitchens, log furniture and views of the river. The new business also extends "downtown," giving boaters who dock in front of it more attractions to draw them, according to Kim Schwanz, executive director of Benewah County's economic development organization.
- Panhandle Health District will hold the grand opening of its new building in St. Maries on July 31. The new building includes four exam rooms, space for the women, infants and children nutrition education program, two rooms for clients to meet with staff and a computer station to access food permits and other online documents. It also includes a second-floor meeting room for larger classes.

BONNER COUNTY

- Pend Oreille Surgery Center recently broke ground on an 8,400-square-foot facility on Highway 200 in Ponderay. The outpatient surgical facility, owned by four local doctors, includes three operating rooms and will be completed in spring of 2009.

- Rose's Exotic Birds and Supplies recently opened in downtown Sandpoint. The store sells parrots and everything required to make them healthy and happy. Before it opened, parrot lovers had to travel to Spokane for supplies.
- Thomas Ward, owner of Stepping Stones Studio in Sandpoint, recently won Bon Appétit's cabinet hardware competition with the knobs, pulls and lamps he makes from glacial and river rocks he finds when canoeing. Ward says, "Every stone I place is done in a way that will present its natural beauty and dignity to people who've been separated from nature." Examples of the lamps, knobs, and pulls can be viewed at www.stonehardware.com. Ward is just one of many artists and craftsmen who call Sandpoint home and are inspired by its natural beauty.
- With energy prices skyrocketing, wood-fuel manufacturers like Lignetics near Sandpoint and North Idaho Energy Logs in Moyie Springs find their products in high demand. More Americans are using pressed logs and wood pellets in wood stoves than a couple of years ago. Both operations have increased production in the last two years, but they are near their capacities because they rely on chips and sawdust from sawmills. But because of low lumber prices sawmills in the Pacific Northwest have significantly reduced production during the last two years so less sawdust and wood chips are available. The increased cost of trucking raw materials also is a constraint.

BOUNDARY COUNTY

- Head Start recently opened the \$360,000 Julien Bucher Early Learning Center in Bonners Ferry. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Housing and Community Facilities Program provided a \$185,000 loan and \$56,000 grant to make the new 3,000-square-foot building possible. The Boundary County commissioners donated the land. BF Builders of Bonners Ferry was the general contractor.
- Camper Down Embroidery, a custom embroidery shop, recently opened in Bonners Ferry. The shop can digitize a design on site and embroider on caps, jackets, shirts, uniforms and cloth bags.

KOOTENAI COUNTY

- After flooding affected Lake Coeur d'Alene in late May, the local tourism promoters were concerned about a possible recurrence and how floating debris might restrict boating and other recreational opportunities on the lake this summer. Fortunately, by mid-June things were pretty well back to normal on the lake. The no-wake restrictions on boats were lifted, and most of the floating debris had been removed. The weather slowly went from wet and cool to normal. On June 22, the Ford Ironman Triathlon, held in Coeur d'Alene for the sixth time, went off without a hitch. Since athletes and their families usually come several days early to start training, the triathlon translates into full hotels and restaurants for a week at a time of the summer when tourism still is fairly slow. Tourist industry representatives believe the Ironman translates into 10,000 bed-nights and brings \$7 million into the community.
- Construction is complete on Coeur d'Alene's tallest high-rise, the 20-story Parkside Condominiums near the new city library. The first five floors house commercial tenants while the upper stories contain 53 luxury condominiums. Tenants have access to three levels of below-ground and surface parking, a 1,500-square-foot fitness center, an 18-hole miniature golf course on a roof and an atrium, plaza and balcony overlooking Lake Coeur d'Alene and Tubbs Hill. Bakery by Lake runs a 2,400-square-foot coffee shop on the first floor where it sells the treats it makes at its main bakery a few blocks away. About a dozen people work at the coffee shop. Bakery owner Frank Piggott also manages the food court on Level 3 and conces-

sions at the miniature golf course. Nighthawk Radiology, North Idaho Title and Miller Stauffer Architects are among the commercial tenants.

- Home Helpers, a company providing in-home nonmedical personal care services to aging adults, new mothers and others, just opened an outlet in Coeur d'Alene. Toronto-based Home Helpers has more than 500 outlets in North America. The Coeur d'Alene outlet, which currently employs six people, is expected to employ 50 people within two years.
- Great Floors LLC, a flooring company headquartered in downtown Coeur d'Alene, started as a small carpet store in Coeur d'Alene in 1973. Today, it sells tile, hardwood, linoleum, slate and bamboo flooring as well as carpet at 13 stores in Washington, one in Boise and one in Coeur d'Alene. It also has four distribution centers and revenues of \$128 million last year. It employs more than 400 people. With growing demand for granite, marble, travertine, quartz and other stone in countertops, floors, fireplaces and vanities, Great Floors recently opened a 24,000-square-foot stone fabrication shop in Post Falls. Sophisticated technology, combining computer-aided design with computer numerical control processors, cut the stone in the most efficient way. Then, workers use grinders and other hand tools to finish the stone that is installed by other workers. About 15 people work at the shop.
- Next fall, the three large school districts in Kootenai County and North Idaho College will offer a diesel automotive and outdoor power equipment class for dual-enrolled high school students. Up to 48 students can participate in the class, which prepares them for work as apprentice mechanics.
- The Village at Riverstone, a 25-acre lifestyle center blending residences with retail, dining and entertainment businesses, recently signed up several new commercial tenants. They include Zumiez, a 2,500-square-foot store selling skateboard and snowboard equipment and apparel; The Buckle, a 4,800-square-foot outlet in a growing national chain known for its denim apparel and accessories; Boardwalk Boutique, a woman's clothing store; and an AT&T wireless kiosk. Barnes & Noble plans to open a 28,000-square-foot store there next spring, and Sangria Grill, a Moscow-based restaurant, also will open in 2009. Houses, condominiums and office buildings also are going up in other parts of the 160-acre Riverstone development, located along the Spokane River close to where it flows out of Lake Coeur d'Alene.
- A 16,500-square-foot office building recently completed in the center of Riverstone will house a Kiemle & Hagood commercial real estate office, Dynamic Health specializing in treatment for allergies and other health problems, a Regence BlueShield insurance office and Riverstone's corporate office.
- Bear Paw Plaza, a 9,000-square-foot, two-level building under construction in front of Fred Meyer in Coeur d'Alene, will house Bear Paw Quilting and a couple of smaller tenants. Bear Paw Quilting, currently located at Sunset Village, sells quilting supplies, accessories and Bernina equipment and offers classes. It employs 14 people.
- Western States Cat, based in Meridian, plans to construct a \$7 million, 56,000-square-foot building on U.S. 95 in Hayden. The Caterpillar equipment dealership should hire nearly 30 people when it opens next spring. Western States Cat believes that the Idaho Panhandle will continue its rapid growth.

- Cy'an Blue, a home furnishings and décor store with a western touch, recently opened in Hayden. The 2,100-square-foot store also sells stained glass, gift items and espresso products.

SHOSHONE COUNTY

- A new restaurant recently opened in an old school house in Clarkia, an unincorporated town that is 30 miles southeast of St. Maries. Open from 4 a.m. to 2 p.m. seven days a week, the Schoolhouse serves home-style food to truck drivers, hunters and local residents.
- Tomi Lyle opened Living Gardens Nursery near Osburn in May. The nursery sells locally grown trees, shrubs and perennials. It also offers hanging baskets, containers for "spaghetti and salsa" gardens and concrete supplies for walkways and landscaping.
- Sunnyside Drug in Kellogg recently completed a \$200,000 remodel, doubling the arts and crafts section. Sunnyside Drug is part of the family-run Lavigne Drug Group led by father Dale Lavigne as chief executive and his son, Ron, as president. Dale started the local company in 1958 in Osburn and has since added three other locations in Sunnyside, Tabor's Drug of Wallace and Rathdrum Drug. The Lavignes employ over 50 Silver Valley residents.

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NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO

Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis and Nez Perce counties

LEWISTON SITE OF WORK FORCE SUMMIT

Getting and keeping workers has become a growing challenge for employers in north central Idaho, and more than 150 business representatives, economic development leaders, educators and employment experts met June 24 at the North Central Idaho Work Force Summit in Lewiston to discuss the challenges of increasing skill requirements when the work force is shrinking and aging.

In 1995, 1,755 north central Idaho residents turned 16 while 854 turned 60. In 2005, 1,745 residents turned 16 while 1,148 turned 60. No wonder it's become increasingly difficult to fill the jobs normally held by younger workers. And the challenge will only grow. By 2015, 1,366 residents will turn 16 while 1,588 will turn 60. The number of people entering the labor force is likely to be smaller than the number of people leaving it.

Representatives attending the summit sponsored by the Idaho Department of Labor and the Clearwater Economic Development Association outlined their priorities in beginning to form a strategy for maintaining an adequate work force.

NEZ PERCE TRIBE

The Nez Perce Tribe recently received an A+ Friend of Education Award from the Idaho Education Association for the more than \$820,000 the tribe has given to schools in Kamiah, Orofino, Culdesac, Troy, Lewiston, Juliaetta, Kendrick and Lapwai. The money has financed preschool, kindergarten, after-school and other programs. When the Lapwai School District did not pass the bond levy for a new high school last year, the tribe pledged \$500,000 over five years. In addition, the tribe hosts back-to-school barbecues for the Lapwai, Orofino and Kamiah communities, where it gives away backpacks full of school supplies and offers various prizes such as alarm clocks, calculators and bicycles.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

CLEARWATER COUNTY

- Eric MacEachern, warden of the Idaho Correctional Institution in Orofino, recently gave an update on the prison to the Orofino Chamber of Commerce. The prison, which opened in 1984, houses 541 inmates and employs 160 people. About 240 inmates are classified as medium security, including a number who are involved in therapeutic programs to deal with addiction and behavioral issues. Another 70 are involved in the community model where they are taught social and work skills to enable them to reintegrate into society when they are released. At the work camp, 140 minimum-security inmates are trained and work throughout the area.

IDAHO AND LEWIS COUNTIES

- Clearwater Builders Supply recently opened two miles southeast of Kamiah on U.S. Highway 12. The 26,000-square-foot store is the largest location in a chain that also includes Grangeville Builders Supply and Orofino Builders Supply. The store recently began selling stoves, dishwashers and other household appliances. It also has a sporting goods department with plenty of hunting, fishing and camping gear for travelers along Highway 12. The need for the expansion comes from the steady number of new homes being built in rural communities. With gas prices rising, locals are especially grateful to be able to make purchases locally.
- Miller Hardware, a fixture on Grangeville's Main Street for 106 years, will close within the next five months. It began as a farm implement dealership that evolved into a hardware store a few years later. In 1913, the current owner's great-grandfather became one of the store's owners. Since then, four generations of the Urbahn family have owned the store. Owners John and Annelle Urbahn are getting ready to retire.
- The Rural Health Care Access Program, administered by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, awarded a \$36,000 grant to Syringa Hospital and Clinics in Grangeville to help retain clinicians by reducing their educational loans over the next three years. Attracting and retaining physicians and medical technicians is difficult for rural hospitals like Syringa.

LATAH COUNTY

- Moscow recently formed a new urban renewal district, the Legacy Crossing Urban Renewal District, to create a mixed-use area between its vibrant downtown and the University of Idaho. The area, which is dominated by aging grain elevators, could provide high-density housing for up to 1,500 people and commercial ventures in a setting that could set a standard for urban development. Tax valuations in an urban renewal project are frozen in the beginning and revenues from any increased valuations go toward infrastructure and other improvements within the district. Another urban renewal district in Moscow is the Alturas Research and Technology Park, an industrial park designed to foster high-tech spinoffs from the University of Idaho and Washington State University.

LEWISTON METROPOLITAN AREA

- One of downtown Lewiston's oldest businesses is closing. Kling's has met the stationery and office supply needs of the community since the 1880s. Books, art supplies and gifts also were sold. Every child in the Lewiston area knows its candy and popcorn counter. Mike and Deanna Haines, who own the Diamond Shop next door, purchased the building. Art and Frame by D&J will move in from a much smaller space in mid-August when it will have purchased the candy counter, art supply and book side of the business. It will continue to be run by the same Kling's employees who work

there now. The office supplies section is being liquidated. Big box stores and the tendency for people to order increasingly more of their supplies over the Internet or from Spokane have made that part of the business unprofitable.

- The Red Lion Hotel in Lewiston currently is in the midst of a \$2 million renovation. The Lewiston-Clarkston Valley's largest hotel is receiving new paint, carpeting and furniture. Granite sink vanities, flat-screen televisions, microwaves and refrigerators have been added to all the guest rooms. The make-over is the most extensive since 47 rooms were added to the 20-year-old hotel in 2001.
- Aaron's, a national retailer that sells and leases furniture and appliances, expects to open a store in Lewiston this September. It has an 8,600-square-foot building under construction.
- The Lewiston office of Idaho Department of Labor recently assisted Bi-Mart, a discount retailer planning to open a store at the former Liquidation World site in Clarkston in early August. Bi-Mart, which was hiring 70 workers for the new store, carries electronics, housewares, toys, clothing, hardware, sporting goods, automotive accessories, beer, wine and food items. It also has pharmacy and photo processing services. It currently has 67 stores in Oregon, Washington and Idaho. Bi-Mart believes the Wal-Mart supercenter scheduled for construction a couple of blocks away will bring even more customers its way.

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SOUTHWESTERN IDAHO

Ada, Adams, Boise, Canyon, Elmore, Gem, Owyhee, Payette, Valley & Washington counties

There is no report for southwestern Idaho this month. The region's labor force table is included on page 33.

SOUTH CENTRAL IDAHO

Blaine, Camas, Cassia, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka and Twin Falls counties

AREA'S JOB GROWTH CONTINUES AT SLOWER PACE

The fourth quarter payroll tax reports from employers paint an upbeat, albeit not euphoric, economic picture. The Twin Falls-Jerome Micropolitan Statistical Area posted 2.2 percent nonfarm job growth from the last three months of 2006, an increase of 855. The high-growth sectors were education, health care, transportation and warehousing each with about 9.5 percent growth.

Education and health care are both coping with the lack of trained workers. Wages of teachers and instructors will have to increase significantly just to retain current educators let alone attract new people to the field. The bump in wages for nurses was a by-product of the nursing shortage, but other incentives also came into play. Signing bonuses, tuition reimbursement and significant scheduling flexibility were provided to attract and retain registered nurses. Education partnered with the private sector to supplement salaries of instructors and expand training access. The shortage of health care professionals continues but has captured the attention of most higher education institutions and government officials, who have the wherewithal to resolve it.

In schools, there will be a significant drop in teachers because so many are near or at retirement age. They will have to be replaced and even more teachers

added to accommodate growth at a time when some believe morale has plunged within the profession as public respect for teachers has ebbed. Standardized testing attempts to make teachers accountable for low scores but fails to recognize modern economic circumstances that seriously affect children – both parents working, more single parents, more grandparents in the parental role and more foster parents. This change in the nuclear family is aggravating these problems. The number of students who speak English as a second language throughout the eight-county region of south central Idaho is significant, and fewer educators makes improving low test scores difficult at best. Charter and private schools are increasing to provide alternatives. But disillusionment within the teaching corps only increases the number of teachers needed in the future. Education is on a steep growth path but it will be rocky while it tries to re-establish interest in the profession.

Transportation and warehousing are primarily support sectors for the producers in south central Idaho, reliant on the productivity of manufacturers and farmers. More broadly, national companies have pinpointed locations along Interstate 84 for distribution centers. The price of real estate and labor are comparatively low while the area is accessible to markets. The Twin Falls/Jerome area has built up an economic cluster around plastics, which includes grocery bags, plastic straws, eating utensils, thermoplastic valves, fittings and piping systems. The other strong industry is food processing, particularly cheese, whey protein and dried milk products. Transportation and warehousing have grown to accommodate these sectors in addition to the mainstay agricultural commodities. The high price of fuel has yet to catch up with the record high prices paid for crops such as wheat, corn, milk and alfalfa. With continued strong global demand for these crops and the loss of acreage in the Midwest due to flooding and storms, prices are projected to continue their ascent.

South Central Idaho Table 1: Nonfarm Payroll Job Comparisons							
	Dec 2007	Dec 2006	Dec 2005	2006-2007 # Change	2006-2007 % Change	2005-2006 # Change	2005-2006 % Change
Total Nonfarm Payroll Jobs	40,540	39,685	38,417	855	2.2%	1,268	3.3%
Natural Resources & Mining	41	26	32	15	57.7%	-6	-18.8%
Construction	2,314	2,312	2,025	2	0.1%	287	14.2%
Food Manufacturing	2,553	2,478	2,482	75	3.0%	-4	-0.2%
Other Manufacturing	2,081	2,108	1,823	-27	-1.3%	285	15.6%
Wholesale Trade	1,969	1,902	1,827	67	3.5%	75	4.1%
Retail Trade	6,001	6,038	5,734	-37	-0.6%	304	5.3%
Utilities	159	145	154	14	9.7%	-9	-5.8%
Transportation & Warehousing	2,394	2,187	2,226	207	9.5%	-39	-1.8%
Information	670	635	600	35	5.5%	35	5.8%
Financial Activities	1,777	1,752	1,724	25	1.4%	28	1.6%
Professional & Business Services	5,164	4,986	5,112	178	3.6%	-126	-2.5%
Educational & Health Services	5,372	5,116	3,350	256	5.0%	1,766	52.7%
Leisure & Hospitality	2,956	2,966	2,910	-10	-0.3%	56	1.9%
Other Services	1,399	1,410	1,333	-11	-0.8%	77	5.8%
Government Education	3,339	3,310	3,287	29	0.9%	23	0.7%
Government Administration	2,351	2,314	3,798	37	1.6%	-1,484	-39.1%

The unfulfilled demand for construction laborers in 2005 and 2006 has worked to the region's advantage. Since contractors were running jobs with short crews, it was easy to adapt when the slow down hit. Continued commercial construction, pent up demand for remodeling work and the growth of housing around the new Latter-day Saints temple have kept those crews in work that was not available in other parts of the state once housing permits dropped and sales of existing homes slowed. As a result, employment was steady from 2006 to 2007 for construction after explosive 14.2 percent growth from 2005 to 2006.

Natural resources and mining employ so few that the jump in jobs with the resurgence in mining resulted in a huge percentage increase.

Non-food manufacturing employment surged over 15 percent from 2005 to 2006, primarily due to Jayco and Hilex Poly ramping up, and there was only an inconsequential decline of 27 jobs in 2007, likely the fallout from the earlier heavy hiring. Flat growth is projected in the short run until the economic slow-down releases the nation from its grip and companies are once again looking at major capital investment.

Professional and business services took a hit early and likely felt another round of job losses during the first part of 2008. Retail jobs have kept pace over the last few years, but 2008 will see a loss as consumer confidence and fuel prices take an extraordinarily large wedge out of household budgets.

South Central Table 1 on the previous page illustrates the changes in the region's nonfarm payroll jobs.

South Central Idaho will continue to outperform the rest of the state and the nation in job growth. However, there remains the issue of the quality of jobs, which continues to be a challenge for the region's leaders.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

JEROME/GOODING/LINCOLN COUNTIES

- Crossroads Point Business Center broke ground in June for the Heritage Office Building, a new 13,500-square-foot, three-story office building. Its design recreates the North Side Investment Co.'s North Side Inn that graced downtown Jerome from 1908 to 1966 and was an integral layover between Boise and Pocatello. Many land deals were cut among prospective buyers and the land holding company in that landmark hotel. The property is owned by Gerrit and Lori Dragt, who will be the contractors for the Heritage Inn and tenants when Dragt Construction relocates from Filer. Other tenants are expected to be professional businesses with leases already being discussed for 60 percent of the development. Dragt Construction expects to build a slightly larger business center near or abutting Crossroads Point.
- The Bureau of Land Management's south central Idaho Interagency Dispatch Center in Shoshone has sent Idaho firefighters and management personnel to help with the most recent rash of lightening-ignited fires in Northern California. This is the second time in the last 12 months that Idaho fire-



Historical postcard of Jerome's North Side Inn, 1909-1967.
Postcard provided by Roger Morley of Jerome.

fighters have assisted California. The south central district is responsible for 2.7 million acres of public land in Idaho.

TWIN FALLS COUNTY

- A new used car dealership has landed in Twin Falls. Thrifty Car Sales sells used rental cars that are fuel efficient and have a warranty. Only 10 percent of its inventory is in trucks and vans. More than \$125,000 was spent to remodel the existing building for the dealership, which employs six sales and administrative people.
- The expansion of medical office space is just starting in Twin Falls. Leading the pack is St. Luke's with a new 3,100-square-foot expansion of the oncology and chemotherapy suite of the Mountain States Tumor Institute that has taken four years to complete. The center includes a pharmacy and wig room for cancer patients.
- Work began in late May on The Pinnacle, which will provide general office space and condos and house the Magic Valley Arts Council. There will be a public plaza area outside for events. The building on the canyon rim is owned by a group of realtors, builders and business people. Western Appraisal, Milestone Builders and Developers, an attorney and a doctor have already signed leases.
- The College of Southern Idaho's Refugee Center expects 100 refugees to arrive in the area this summer and, in partnership with the Twin Falls School District, will provide a transition center for the K-12 refugee students near O'Leary Junior High. The students with limited English will get help in entering mainstream education. The center will also assist ninth grade students who need remedial help to advance to the 10th grade. Refugee parents could also use the center's services.
- The \$16.4 million Filer school bond has passed with just over the two-thirds majority required. In October, voters rejected a \$14.9 million bond issue with less than 61 percent and an \$800,000 measure with under 57 percent. About \$11 million from the new bond will finance construction of a 49,000-square-foot intermediate school for fourth through sixth grade, freeing classroom space at both the elementary and middle schools. Another \$1.2 million will be used to add eight new classrooms to the high school, \$600,000 goes for roof repairs at Filer Elementary and Hollister Elementary schools, \$75,000 to resurface the middle school parking lot and \$800,000 for football field restrooms, bleachers, concession building and night lighting. This will ease overcrowding but will also accommodate projected student growth of up to 10 percent over the next decade.
- Buhl 4-H kids have the opportunity to adopt an alpaca from April to fair time in September. The 4-H leaders rent alpacas to the kids for \$1. The alpacas remain on their owners' farms, but the kids meet weekly to learn about the care, history, training, handling and judging of the animals along with the business side of raising alpacas for their fiber, which varies in levels of quality.

MINIDOKA AND CASSIA COUNTIES

- Government continues to be an important component in rural Idaho, offering administrative, managerial, science and computer-oriented opportunities. But budget constraints are forcing the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rupert Rural Development service center to close and consolidate operations in Twin Falls. The Mini-Cassia area will receive services from the centralized location, primarily loan and grant programs.

- Last December the construction of a new ethanol plant in Heyburn was abandoned by Renova Energy PLC when costs were projected at \$60 million, \$13 million over budget. In June, the British company has for the second time in the last six months suspended trading of its securities on the Alternative Investment Market, a sub-market of the London Stock Exchange for less capitalized companies. Also in June the company announced its U.S. subsidiaries had voluntarily filed with the bankruptcy court to restructure their finances. It is reported that the unfinished Heyburn plant is for sale so other profitable operations can remain afloat such as its ethanol-producing plant in Torrington, Wyo.
- Keystone Automotive Operations Inc. has chosen Burley for its 25th receiving and distribution facility. It is the largest specialty equipment aftermarket warehouse distributor in the world, using a logistics system called cross-docking to receive and distribute products at the same facility. The Pennsylvania-based company sells to auto parts and accessories stores. The 13,000-square-foot Burley wholesale facility serving customers in Idaho, Wyoming, Utah and Montana employs six workers at around \$12.50 an hour with benefits.

BLAINE/CAMAS COUNTIES

- With good weather comes music in Ketchum. Ketch'em Alive on Tuesday evenings starts at 7 p.m. at the Forest Service Park downtown, and Jazz in the Park on Sundays runs from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Ketchum's Rotary Park. The weekly concerts run the gamut from reggae, traditional rock 'n roll, traditional jazz and "trash can Americana" featuring creative instruments. Headliner bands this year will travel from Seattle, Illinois and Arkansas and local entertainers are booked to follow. Ketch'em Alive is sponsored by the Ketchum Chamber with local hoteliers providing accommodations for the bands.
- Representatives of three sheep operations and a wildlife conservation group are working with a retired Idaho Fish and Game professional to ensure the Phantom Hill wolf pack does not bother sheep grazing near Ketchum. Portable, solar-powered and banner-laden electric fences are erected to keep the sheep in and the wolves out at night when wolves typically are on the prowl. Great Pyrenees dogs have also been brought in to protect the sheep bands. The collaborative effort started in mid-June and will continue into the fall.

CHINOOK SEASON

- It has been a little over 30 years since the Idaho Fish and Game Commission last authorized a Chinook salmon season on the upper Salmon River near Clayton. But this year Fish and Game estimates there will be five times the number of returning Chinook compared to 2007. The upper Salmon stretch from close to Clayton and extending to the Sawtooth Hatchery will be open from June 19 to Aug. 2. The South Fork of the Salmon opened June 25 until further notice. The first week of the season in the Stanley area got off to a slow start due to high water. There were no reports of Chinook being caught, but the peak season is the first half of July.

WINERIES

- The wineries in south central Idaho are attracting notoriety and medals. The Frenchman's Gulch Winery in Ketchum celebrated a coup during the Northwest's largest competition at Mount Hood. The particular winner was a 2005 Curvee, best red Bordeaux blend under \$30. The wine was released at the Food and Wine Festival in Ketchum earlier this month. The grapes are grown in eastern Washington and, in conforming to the small family winery concept, are purchased in smaller batches by the acre.

BIKE FESTIVALS

- Every area holds a festival or two throughout the summer. But fitness is the thing in Blaine County, and mountain bikes are the bike du jour for the third weekend of June. The Sheeptown Fat Tire Rally started in Hailey and ended up at the Galena Lodge. This was the second annual rally with events scheduled over four days, including the Hot Tire Hill Climb, in which one must safely transport a hot dog held in one hand up a hill. The drag race requires racers to attach logs to their seat posts and pull them along. Live music and barbeque were added attractions in Hailey. On the last day, the rally finished up at Galena Summit with a ride and a chef-prepared lunch. The Knobby Tire Series has organized the Epic Soldier Mountain March Slaughter Downhill with a name designed to intimidate. This was held in Fairfield at Soldier Mountain. The two-day event provides different levels of expertise from professional to beginner and is designed for having fun with creek crossings and a cross-country dash through the trees, climbing to 8,000 feet. Bonfires dot the parking lot on Saturday as many of the participants enjoy the opportunity to camp out beneath the stars. This is the same parking lots normally seeing vehicles lined up on ice and snow with ski racks.

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SOUTHEASTERN IDAHO

Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida & Power counties

ECONOMIC TRENDS

The total number of nonfarm jobs in the Pocatello Metropolitan Statistical Area in May was unchanged from a year earlier. But unlike many urban areas across the country, Pocatello saw a slight increase in typically higher-paying goods-producing jobs offsetting a small decline in the service sector. Increased manufacturing more than offset job losses in construction while the significant growth in wholesale and retail trade over the year fell just short of covering losses in government, leisure and hospitality and transportation.

From April to May jobs in professional and business services jumped dramatically, largely due to the start of a new construction season and the hiring of landscaping and highway flagging crews. It could also signal the decision of many employers to hire workers through temporary employment agencies because of their uneasiness over the future of the economy.

The largest job loss between April and May was the seasonal reduction in education as teachers and college students who had been working on campus took off for the summer.

The increase in the unemployment rate from 3 percent in April to 3.6 percent in May was the largest month-to-month increase rate for the metro area since the summer of 1999. At that time the unemployment rate changed from 4.9 percent in July to 5.7 percent in August. But even with the rising unemployment rate, there were nearly 700 more people working in the area than a year earlier. The labor force was up nearly 1,000.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

BANNOCK COUNTY

- Premier Technology announced plans to add 24,000 square feet to its manufacturing facility north of Chubbuck to keep up with demand for their products and services. Premier expects to hire 100 more people at its expanded facility.

- The governing board for the National Circuit Finals Rodeo will return to Pocatello for at least two more years. There was concern that failure to finance renovation of Holt Arena would discourage the rodeo from returning to Pocatello, but Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association officials have been pleased with how the city has supported and produced the rodeo.
- Hoku Scientific and Great Western Malting will reuse wastewater at their new plants and share the cost of building a new access road to them. Reusing wastewater will save both companies money by reducing their consumption of natural gas and water. The road, to be called Hoku Way, will connect to Kraft Road and Highway 30. Construction is supported by the Pocatello Development Authority.
- After months of discussion and community response, the Bannock County Commission approved a new county comprehensive plan. The commission placed a six-month moratorium on planned communities to give itself time to establish guidelines for evaluating those projects. The new plan gives a higher level of protection to water, wildlife and other natural resources while addressing orderly land use and the availability of services.

BEAR LAKE COUNTY

- Triad Resorts officials are preparing to apply for rezoning property for their manufacturing business from R-4 to R-20. Soil testing is complete, and construction could begin in August.
- The Bear Lake County Planning and Zoning Commission approved the master plan for Black Bear Mountain Resort and the initial preliminary plat on the condition that water issues are resolved. Both sides indicate that resolution is near.

BINGHAM COUNTY

- Western Energy Corp. has applied for authority to build a wind power project in the foothills east of Firth. The company plans 66 wind turbines on 5,000 acres in what it is calling the Cedar Creek Wind Power Project, which is scheduled to be operating by late 2010 or early 2011. Western Energy is a Firth-based company, and representatives say the project will produce 100 megawatts of power.
- Fort Hall officials have broken ground for a \$20 million Justice Center on the reservation. The two-story center will house three courtrooms, the Fort Hall Police Department, 100-bed prison and administrative offices. Facilities and legal staff now located in three separate building will be consolidated in the new center. Construction should be completed in December 2009.

CARIBOU COUNTY

- After having received over 47,000 comments on the final environmental impact statement, the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management approved the J.R. Simplot Company's extension of its open pit phosphate mine in Caribou County.

FRANKLIN COUNTY

- Bentley Capital Management based in Hurricane, Utah, has proposed a large scale development south of Preston. The project would include a hotel, movie theater, grocery store, strip mall and possibly even a hospital. Project Manager Scott Nielson gave the project a 70 percent chance of going forward. It depends on Bentley's success in enticing major stores to anchor the development. Nielson also said that if a new hospital was to be included in the development, it would be in partnership with Franklin County Medical Center.

- Last year Ernest Bleinberger of Strategy 5 LLC won the commitment of Franklin County officials to back his request for a \$20,000 U.S. Department of Agriculture grant to study the feasibility of an equestrian facility in the county. The county matched the grant with \$1,000. Bleinberger has met with county commissioners to discuss the specific questions they would like explored, and a hearing will also be held to gather public reaction.
- Officials at the Franklin County Medical Center are still working on plans for a new facility, which is expected to be built in the next couple of years. The Larry H. Miller family has already donated 20 acres for the new hospital. But many areas need additional study. Concerns about an archaeological study, financial feasibility, borrowing capacity, lines of business, facility design and environmental impact still need to be addressed before construction bids can be considered.

ONEIDA COUNTY

- Schmidt Construction has won the contract to upgrade the city of Malad's water system and replace much of the pipeline. Construction is scheduled to be done in two phases. The first will be completed late this summer, and the second will begin next spring. Nearly two and a half years ago the residents approved a \$2,025,000 bond to upgrade their water system.

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EAST CENTRAL IDAHO

Bonneville, Butte, Clark, Custer, Fremont, Jefferson, Lemhi, Madison & Teton counties

IDAHO INTERNATIONAL DANCE AND MUSIC FESTIVAL

In 1983, a folk dance group from Ricks College, now Brigham Young University – Idaho, embarked on a European Dance Festival tour. The directors and chaperones who accompanied the team envisioned hosting a festival in America and met with local city and chamber of commerce officials on their return.

The chamber, actively looking to increase tourism in the area, quickly grabbed hold of the idea and formed a committee, and in 1986, Rexburg sponsored its first International Dance Festival with groups from around the world.

Folk dancers have come every year to participate in this event, bringing dance and music to the streets and gathering places of Rexburg and other towns throughout Idaho.

Idaho International Dance & Music Festival

Burley, July 23-25

Rexburg, July 26-Aug. 2

Tickets and information at

<http://www.rexcc.com/festival/index.html>.

Each year about 10 teams from throughout the world participate. Only one team per country can be included. Teams have come from Africa, Asia, Europe, South America, North America and islands scattered across the seas. The 2007 festival marked the 22nd season for the Dance and Music Festival in Rexburg. There were adult workshops, youth culture forums, parades, gatherings at the local parks and, of course, performances.

Host families are a tremendous support to visiting dancers. Besides getting to know these talented individuals from other countries, the host families can help with the large financial burden associated with making the trip to Idaho. In return, the host families get discounts and free tickets to performances and other incentives. The chamber is still short a few host families for the teams from Greece, India, Belgium, China and Russia for this year's festival.

The countries performing for 2008 include Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, France, Greece, India, Israel, Mexico, Russia, Russia Siberia, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and the United States. Festivities will start off in Burley on July 23 through July 25 and then move to Rexburg from July 26 through Aug. 2. There are free events as well as ticketed events.

Donna Benfield, executive director of the Rexburg Chamber of Commerce, said 13 teams is the most the festival has had. This is the first year for teams from the Dominican Republic, Sri Lanka and Greece. Benfield said that the festival attracts 50,000 to 60,000 people over its 10-day run, generating \$1.2 million to \$2 million from tourists, participants and the host families helping their dancers have a good time in the United States. There are over 300 dancers and 175 host families. Tickets and information can be found at <http://www.rexccc.com/festival/index.html>.



Dancers from Tahiti at the 2006 festival.
Photo: Rexburg Chamber of Commerce.



Dancers from South Korea at the 2006 festival.
Photo: Rexburg Chamber of Commerce.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

BONNEVILLE COUNTY

- Since Areva announced its plans to build a uranium enrichment plant in Bonneville County, many have wondered when the hiring would start. Areva Vice President Bob Poyser said that is at least a year and a half to two years away. "All persons interested in employment should go to the areva.com Web site and fill out the employment forms to get on the list when the time comes," he said. Any interest from commercial firms should be sent to steven.bullock@areva.com. He will make sure any literature or information submitted will be properly routed and maintained for future reference. He said the company will not respond to phone solicitations.
- A five-story, 107-room Marriott Residence Inn that will overlook the Snake River and the falls at Taylor Crossing on the River should be completed next summer. After that, the development will focus on finishing 10 three-story "live-work units" where retail occupies the ground floors and town homes make up the upper levels. There is also a five-story structure that will house 200 condominiums — studios to three bedroom units — in the plans. A water park planned east of the condos will become an ice skating rink in the winter with wind-shielding kiosks and a gathering place to the side. A few steps from the greenbelt will be an outdoor pool with water jets spraying over it and a tunnel of water to swim through. A secondary greenbelt will be constructed and an amphitheater will be built in between the two with bronze statues adorning the walkways. A reception center is also planned. The entire project should be completed in five years.

MADISON COUNTY

- A wedding accessory manufacturing business is closing in Rexburg after 20-plus years. The Hortense B. Hewitt plant is laying off 55 workers over the summer due to changes in customer buying habits. The plant has specialized in making and shipping wedding accessories to retail accounts in the U.S. and Canada. The production operations will be consolidated with sister company facilities in Minnesota and Idaho. The company is named for the woman who began sewing garters and marketing them for weddings in the early 1940s. The Rexburg plant opened in the early 1980s, when Artco bought it from Hewitt's son. In 1985, the local companies were sold to the Taylor Corporation based in North Mankato, Minn.

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DIRECT DEPOSIT NOW AVAILABLE FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIMANTS

Unemployment insurance claimants throughout Idaho can now have their weekly benefit checks deposited directly into their bank checking accounts.

After a month-long pilot test of the direct deposit system in Boise, Coeur d’Alene and Pocatello, the Idaho Department of Labor extended the direct deposit option to claimants statewide beginning June 30.

To take advantage of direct deposit, claimants must have a bank checking account and a personal e-mail address. Benefits payments will be deposited within four business days after claimants certify their weekly eligibility using the department’s automated Internet Continued Claim or Tel-A-Claim systems.

Direct deposit should improve service to unemployed workers while helping the department reduce administrative costs in a period of increasing budget constraints.

“Direct deposit is a safe, quick and easy way for claimants to receive their unemployment insurance benefits,” bureau chief Roger Holmes said. “It removes the risk of delayed mail and lost or stolen checks. It also gets rid of check cashing fees and eliminates the time and gas claimants would use to drive somewhere to cash or deposit checks.”

The department expects at least 30 percent of claimants to opt for direct deposit. Those who do not specifically select direct deposit will continue receiving their benefit checks by mail.

Unemployed workers can sign up for direct deposit online at <http://labor.idaho.gov/iw> and clicking on the direct deposit tab.

Direct deposit is faster and more secure than mail. It is less expensive because there is no cost for printing benefit checks, no postage for mailing and fewer stop payment charges for lost or stolen checks.

In 2007, Idaho issued nearly 530,000 unemployment checks. The Department of Labor estimates that if just half the benefit claimants participate in direct deposit, it will save \$130,500 annually in postage and processing costs.

State of Idaho Data

May 2008 Labor Force (preliminary) compared to May 2007 data *(continued on next page)*.

Seasonally Adjusted Data	Civilian Labor Force	May 2008			Civilian Labor Force	May 2007		
		# Unem- ployed	% Unem- ployed	Total Employ- ment		# Unem- ployed	% Unem- ployed	Total Employ- ment
STATE OF IDAHO	754,944	26,933	3.6	728,011	753,916	20,474	2.7	733,442
COUNTIES								
ADA (1)	193,230	7,050	3.6	186,180	194,616	4,832	2.5	189,784
ADAMS	2,369	145	6.1	2,224	2,370	96	4.1	2,273
BANNOCK (8)	38,850	1,430	3.7	37,419	37,943	1,147	3.0	36,796
BEAR LAKE	3,232	77	2.4	3,155	3,177	64	2.0	3,113
BENEWAH	3,964	304	7.7	3,660	4,077	184	4.5	3,893
BINGHAM	21,733	627	2.9	21,106	21,867	503	2.3	21,364
BLAINE (5)	13,775	362	2.6	13,413	13,710	290	2.1	13,421
BOISE (1)	3,646	117	3.2	3,528	3,686	89	2.4	3,597
BONNER	21,381	966	4.5	20,415	21,084	642	3.0	20,441
BONNEVILLE (6)	51,229	1,236	2.4	49,993	50,955	990	1.9	49,965
BOUNDARY	4,110	255	6.2	3,855	4,307	254	5.9	4,053
BUTTE	1,630	43	2.7	1,587	1,503	29	1.9	1,474
CAMAS (5)	617	16	2.6	601	614	12	2.0	602
CANYON (1)	81,664	3,706	4.5	77,958	82,380	2,914	3.5	79,467
CARIBOU	3,350	88	2.6	3,262	3,381	87	2.6	3,294
CASSIA (2)	10,237	303	3.0	9,934	10,496	329	3.1	10,168
CLARK	559	7	1.3	552	558	8	1.4	551
CLEARWATER	3,330	239	7.2	3,091	3,500	184	5.3	3,316
CUSTER	2,796	63	2.3	2,733	2,895	59	2.1	2,836
ELMORE	11,377	475	4.2	10,902	11,558	391	3.4	11,167
FRANKLIN	6,308	147	2.3	6,161	6,228	123	2.0	6,105
FREMONT (9)	6,362	172	2.7	6,190	6,192	116	1.9	6,076
GEM (1)	7,298	349	4.8	6,949	7,325	242	3.3	7,083
GOODING	8,418	198	2.4	8,220	8,203	146	1.8	8,057
IDAHO	7,659	364	4.8	7,294	7,580	305	4.0	7,276
JEFFERSON (6)	11,235	255	2.3	10,980	11,167	192	1.7	10,974
JEROME (10)	10,268	282	2.7	9,986	10,312	242	2.3	10,071
KOOTENAI (3)	72,479	2,699	3.7	69,780	71,328	1,894	2.7	69,434
LATAH	17,351	497	2.9	16,854	17,703	380	2.1	17,323
LEMHI	4,337	160	3.7	4,177	4,339	136	3.1	4,203
LEWIS (4)	1,880	50	2.7	1,830	1,874	49	2.6	1,825
LINCOLN	2,575	67	2.6	2,508	2,598	55	2.1	2,543
MADISON (9)	15,785	453	2.9	15,332	15,377	328	2.1	15,049
MINIDOKA (2)	9,560	316	3.3	9,244	9,823	362	3.7	9,461
NEZ PERCE (7)	19,182	659	3.4	18,524	18,379	550	3.0	17,828
ONEIDA	2,330	60	2.6	2,270	2,251	37	1.7	2,213
OWYHEE (1)	4,695	106	2.3	4,589	4,759	80	1.7	4,678
PAYETTE	10,347	436	4.2	9,912	10,433	373	3.6	10,060
POWER (8)	3,648	115	3.2	3,533	3,580	106	3.0	3,474
SHOSHONE	5,589	333	6.0	5,257	5,735	273	4.8	5,462
TETON	5,158	93	1.8	5,065	4,913	90	1.8	4,823
TWIN FALLS (10)	38,489	1,062	2.8	37,426	38,674	931	2.4	37,743
VALLEY	5,886	361	6.1	5,525	5,426	169	3.1	5,257
WASHINGTON	5,026	188	3.7	4,838	4,986	192	3.9	4,794
ASOTIN WA (7)	10,544	373	3.5	10,170	10,061	355	3.5	9,706

* In thousands

State of Idaho Data

May 2008 Labor Force (preliminary) compared to May 2007 data *(continued from previous page).*

Seasonally Adjusted Data		May 2008			May 2007			
LABOR MARKET AREAS	Civilian Labor Force	# Unem- ployed	% Unem- ployed	Total Employ- ment	Civilian Labor Force	# Unem- ployed	% Unem- ployed	Total Employ- ment
BOISE CITY-NAMPA MSA (1)	290,533	11,329	3.9	279,205	292,765	8,157	2.8	284,609
BURLEY MicSA (2)	19,797	619	3.1	19,178	20,319	690	3.4	19,629
COEUR D'ALENE MSA (3)	72,479	2,699	3.7	69,780	71,328	1,894	2.7	69,434
GRANGEVILLE SLMA (4)	9,538	414	4.3	9,124	9,454	354	3.7	9,101
HAILEY SLMA (5)	14,392	379	2.6	14,014	14,324	302	2.1	14,022
IDAHO FALLS MSA (6)	62,464	1,491	2.4	60,973	62,121	1,182	1.9	60,939
LEWISTON MSA (7)	29,726	1,032	3.5	28,694	28,439	905	3.2	27,534
POCATELLO MSA (8)	42,498	1,545	3.6	40,953	41,523	1,253	3.0	40,270
REXBURG MicSA (9)	22,147	625	2.8	21,522	21,569	444	2.1	21,125
TWIN FALLS MicSA (10)	48,757	1,345	2.8	47,412	48,986	1,173	2.4	47,814
CITIES								
BOISE	110,902	3,459	3.1	107,443	111,672	2,162	1.9	109,510
CALDWELL	17,160	801	4.7	16,359	17,290	616	3.6	16,674
COEUR D' ALENE	22,404	877	3.9	21,526	21,947	531	2.4	21,416
IDAHO FALLS	28,175	690	2.4	27,486	27,992	525	1.9	27,467
LEWISTON	15,950	484	3.0	15,466	15,287	356	2.3	14,931
MERIDIAN	31,322	969	3.1	30,353	31,569	632	2.0	30,936
NAMPA	36,220	1,449	4.0	34,771	36,453	1,014	2.8	35,439
POCATELLO	28,123	844	3.0	27,279	27,464	643	2.3	26,821
TWIN FALLS	20,996	543	2.6	20,452	21,056	433	2.1	20,623
United States*	154,534	8,487	5.5	146,046	152,776	6,863	4.5	145,913

* In thousands

SOURCE: Idaho Department of Labor, Research & Analysis and Public Affairs.

State of Idaho Data — Nonfarm Payroll Jobs

% change from

BY PLACE OF WORK	May 2008*	Apr 2008	May 2007	Last Month	Last Year
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	656,800	651,500	661,700	0.8	-0.7
GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	115,700	114,300	125,400	1.2	-7.7
<i>Natural Resources & Mining</i>	4,700	4,000	4,300	17.5	9.3
Logging	1,500	1,200	1,600	25.0	-6.3
Mining	3,200	2,800	2,700	14.3	18.5
Metal Ore Mining	1,200	1,100	900	9.1	33.3
<i>Construction</i>	48,900	47,800	54,200	2.3	-9.8
<i>Manufacturing</i>	62,100	62,500	66,900	-0.6	-7.2
Durable Goods	39,700	39,900	43,400	-0.5	-8.5
Wood Product Manufacturing	6,800	7,000	8,000	-2.9	-15.0
Sawmills & Wood Preservation	2,100	2,200	2,600	-4.5	-19.2
Veneer & Engineered Products	1,300	1,400	1,500	-7.1	-13.3
Other Wood Product Manufacturing	3,400	3,400	3,900	0.0	-12.8
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	4,800	4,800	4,600	0.0	4.3
Machinery Manufacturing	3,100	3,100	3,000	0.0	3.3
Computer & Electronic Product Manufacturing	14,100	14,200	16,900	-0.7	-16.6
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	3,700	3,700	3,600	0.0	2.8
Other Durable Goods	7,200	7,100	7,300	1.4	-1.4
Nondurable Goods	22,400	22,600	23,500	-0.9	-4.7
Food Manufacturing	14,200	14,200	14,700	0.0	-3.4
Fruits & Vegetable Preserving & Specialty	7,200	7,200	7,500	0.0	-4.0
Paper Manufacturing	1,700	1,700	1,700	0.0	0.0
Printing & Related Support Activities	1,900	1,900	1,900	0.0	0.0
Chemical Manufacturing	2,400	2,400	2,300	0.0	4.3
Other Nondurable Goods	2,200	2,400	2,900	-8.3	-24.1
SERVICE-PROVIDING INDUSTRIES	541,100	537,200	536,300	0.7	0.9
<i>Trade, Transportation, & Utilities</i>	132,000	130,900	132,200	0.8	-0.2
Trade	111,300	110,400	111,400	0.8	-0.1
Wholesale Trade	28,400	27,600	28,100	2.9	1.1
Wholesalers, Durable Goods	13,300	12,900	13,100	3.1	1.5
Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	11,700	11,400	12,000	2.6	-2.5
Retail Trade	82,900	82,800	83,300	0.1	-0.5
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	12,900	12,900	12,700	0.0	1.6
Building Material and Garden Equipment	9,700	9,600	10,200	1.0	-4.9
Food & Beverage Stores	12,300	12,200	12,500	0.8	-1.6
General Merchandise Stores	16,900	16,800	17,000	0.6	-0.6
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	20,700	20,500	20,800	1.0	-0.5
Utilities	2,100	2,000	2,100	5.0	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	18,600	18,500	18,700	0.5	-0.5
Rail Transportation	1,300	1,300	1,300	0.0	0.0
Truck Transportation	9,300	9,300	9,300	0.0	0.0
<i>Information</i>	11,300	11,100	10,900	1.8	3.7
Telecommunications	4,100	4,000	4,000	2.5	2.5
<i>Financial Activities</i>	32,400	32,100	32,800	0.9	-1.2
Finance & Insurance	23,600	23,500	23,800	0.4	-0.8
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	8,800	8,600	9,000	2.3	-2.2
<i>Professional & Business Services</i>	83,700	82,500	84,300	1.5	-0.7
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	33,400	33,700	33,600	-0.9	-0.6
Scientific Research & Development	7,600	7,600	5,600	0.0	35.7
Management of Companies & Enterprises	7,800	7,600	7,800	2.6	0.0
Administrative & Support & Waste Management	42,500	41,200	42,900	3.2	-0.9
Administrative & Support Services	41,600	40,100	40,600	3.7	2.5
<i>Educational & Health Services</i>	74,800	75,300	73,500	-0.7	1.8
Educational Services	7,600	8,500	8,200	-10.6	-7.3
Health Care & Social Assistance	67,200	66,800	65,300	0.6	2.9
Hospitals	16,500	16,400	15,400	0.6	7.1
<i>Leisure & Hospitality</i>	64,800	63,000	63,500	2.9	2.0
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	9,800	9,100	9,200	7.7	6.5
Accommodation & Food Services	55,000	53,900	54,300	2.0	1.3
Accommodation	9,600	9,200	8,600	4.3	11.6
Food Services & Drinking Places	45,400	44,700	45,700	1.6	-0.7
<i>Other Services</i>	19,600	19,800	19,500	-1.0	0.5
<i>Total Government</i>	122,500	122,500	119,600	0.0	2.4
Federal Government	12,300	12,400	12,800	-0.8	-3.9
State & Local Government	110,200	110,100	106,800	0.1	3.2
State Government	29,900	31,000	29,900	-3.5	0.0
State Government Education	14,000	15,600	14,200	-10.3	-1.4
State Government Administration	15,900	15,400	15,700	3.2	1.3
Local Government	80,300	79,100	76,900	1.5	4.4
Local Government Education	42,400	41,800	41,100	1.4	3.2
Local Government Administration	34,400	33,900	32,500	1.5	5.8
Local Government Tribes	3,500	3,400	3,300	2.9	6.1

*Preliminary estimate ** Estimates include all full or part time wage and salary workers who worked or received pay in the following industry groups during the pay period ending nearest the 12th of the month.

State of Idaho Data — State Economic Indicators

				% Change From	
	May 2008	Apr 2008	May 2007	Last Month	Last Year
IDAHO LABOR FORCE ⁽¹⁾					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	754,900	753,100	753,900	0.2	0.1
Unemployment	26,900	23,000	20,500	17.0	31.2
Percent of Labor Force Unemployed	3.6	3.1	2.7		
Total Employment	728,000	730,100	733,400	-0.3	-0.7
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	752,800	748,200	751,300	0.6	0.2
Unemployment	22,600	25,200	15,700	-10.3	43.9
Percent of Labor Force Unemployed	3.0	3.4	2.1		
Total Employment	730,200	723,000	735,600	1.0	-0.7
U. S. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE ⁽²⁾					
	5.5	5.0	4.5		
U.S. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX ⁽²⁾					
Urban Wage Earners & Clerical Workers (CPI-W)	212.8	210.7	203.7	1.0	4.5
All Urban Consumer (CPI-U)	216.6	214.8	207.9	0.9	4.2
AGRICULTURE					
Agriculture Employment	46,150	44,470	45,540	3.8	1.3
Operators	9,740	9,740	9,740	0.0	0.0
Unpaid Family	360	350	360	2.9	0.0
Hired Workers	36,050	34,380	35,440	4.9	1.7
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE					
<i>Claims Activities</i>					
Initial Claims ⁽³⁾	7,291	7,981	5,130	-8.6	42.1
Weeks Claimed ⁽⁴⁾	59,408	76,179	37,558	-22.0	58.2
<i>Benefit Payment Activities⁽⁵⁾</i>					
Weeks Compensated	51,427	81,336	37,569	-36.8	36.9
Total Benefit \$ Paid	13,497,623	21,557,423	9,100,383	-37.4	48.3
Average Weekly Benefit Amount	\$262.46	\$265.04	\$242.23	-1.0	8.4
Covered Employers	51,514	51,470	50,722	0.1	1.6
Total Benefit \$ Paid During Last 12 Months ⁽⁴⁾	\$166,942,890	\$162,545,650	\$113,416,591	2.7	47.2

(1) Preliminary estimate

(2) Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

(3) Includes all entitlements/programs on intrastate and interstate agent, new and additional claims.

(4) Includes all entitlements/programs, intrastate and interstate agent.

(5) Includes all entitlements/programs, total liable activities.

Panhandle Data

Coeur d'Alene MSA Labor Force & Employment — Kootenai County

	May 2008*	Apr 2007	May 2007	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	72,480	72,170	71,320	0.4	1.6
Unemployed	2,700	2,440	1,890	10.7	42.9
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.7	3.4	2.7		
Total Employment	69,780	69,730	69,430	0.1	0.5
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	71,000	70,530	69,810	0.7	1.7
Unemployed	2,370	2,830	1,530	-16.3	54.9
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.3	4.0	2.2		
Total Employment	68,630	67,700	68,280	1.4	0.5
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	58,130	57,170	57,630	1.7	0.9
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	10,610	10,360	11,260	2.4	-5.8
Natural Resources & Mining	420	310	450	35.5	-6.7
Construction	5,540	5,370	6,110	3.2	-9.3
Manufacturing	4,650	4,680	4,700	-0.6	-1.1
Wood Product Manufacturing	840	860	950	-2.3	-11.6
Other Manufacturing	3,810	3,820	3,750	-0.3	1.6
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	47,520	46,810	46,370	1.5	2.5
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	11,260	11,190	10,950	0.6	2.8
Wholesale Trade	1,660	1,630	1,570	1.8	5.7
Retail Trade	8,540	8,510	8,250	0.4	3.5
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	1,060	1,050	1,140	1.0	-7.0
Information	990	960	1,010	3.1	-2.0
Financial Activities	3,150	3,130	3,070	0.6	2.6
Professional & Business Services	6,020	5,890	6,040	2.2	-0.3
Educational & Health Services	5,910	5,910	5,680	0.0	4.0
Leisure & Hospitality	8,620	8,290	8,330	4.0	3.5
Other Services	1,540	1,560	1,470	-1.3	4.8
Government Education	3,740	3,710	3,730	0.8	0.3
Government Administration	5,370	5,260	5,270	2.1	1.9
Government Tribes	920	910	810	1.1	13.6

* Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month.

North Central Idaho Data

Lewiston MSA Labor Force & Employment — Nez Perce County, Idaho and Asotin County, Wash.

	May 2008*	Apr 2008	May 2007	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	29,730	30,170	28,440	-1.5	4.5
Unemployment	1,030	980	910	5.1	13.2
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.5	3.3	3.2		
Total Employment	28,700	29,190	27,530	-1.7	4.2
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	29,900	30,340	28,640	-1.5	4.4
Unemployment	950	1,150	800	-17.4	18.8
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.2	3.8	2.8		
Total Employment	28,950	29,190	27,840	-0.8	4.0
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	28,800	28,820	27,800	-0.1	3.6
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	4,580	4,840	4,880	-5.4	-6.1
Natural Resources & Mining	190	190	220	0.0	-13.6
Construction	1,160	1,380	1,330	-15.9	-12.8
Manufacturing	3,230	3,270	3,330	-1.2	-3.0
Wood Product Manufacturing	520	540	620	-3.7	-16.1
Paper Manufacturing	1,160	1,160	1,160	0.0	0.0
Other Manufacturing	1,550	1,570	1,550	-1.3	0.0
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	24,220	23,980	22,920	1.0	5.7
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	5,560	5,580	5,450	-0.4	2.0
Wholesale Trade	680	640	660	6.3	3.0
Retail Trade	3,650	3,700	3,590	-1.4	1.7
Utilities	90	90	90	0.0	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	1,140	1,150	1,110	-0.9	2.7
Information	360	370	410	-2.7	-12.2
Financial Activities	2,840	2,850	2,100	-0.4	35.2
Professional & Business Services	1,960	1,860	1,670	5.4	17.4
Education & Health Services	4,340	4,340	4,310	0.0	0.7
Leisure & Hospitality	2,750	2,620	2,710	5.0	1.5
Other Services	1,050	1,050	1,070	0.0	-1.9
Government Education	2,580	2,530	2,600	2.0	-0.8
Government Administration	2,040	2,060	1,880	-1.0	8.5
Government Tribes	740	720	720	2.8	2.8

*Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month.

Southwestern Idaho Data

Boise-Nampa MSA Labor Force & Employment — Ada, Canyon, Boise, Gem and Owyhee counties

	May 2008*	Apr 2007	May 2007	% Change	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	290,500	290,400	292,800	0.0	-0.8
Unemployment	11,300	9,000	8,200	25.6	37.8
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.9	3.1	2.8		
Total Employment	279,200	281,400	284,600	-0.8	-1.9
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	292,800	292,300	295,100	0.2	-0.8
Unemployment	9,000	9,400	5,900	-4.3	52.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.1	3.2	2.0		
Total Employment	283,800	282,900	289,200	0.3	-1.9
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	277,000	275,100	277,300	0.7	-0.1
GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	50,300	50,100	56,000	0.4	-10.2
<i>Natural Resources & Construction</i>	21,300	21,000	24,200	1.4	-12.0
Construction	21,000	20,700	24,000	1.4	-12.5
<i>Manufacturing</i>	29,000	29,100	31,800	-0.3	-8.8
Durable Goods	22,400	22,500	25,300	-0.4	-11.5
Wood Product Manufacturing	2,400	2,400	2,500	0.0	-4.0
Fabricated Metal Products Mfg.	1,500	1,500	1,600	0.0	-6.3
Machinery Manufacturing	1,200	1,200	1,300	0.0	-7.7
Computer & Electronic Manufacturing	12,600	12,600	15,000	0.0	-16.0
Transportation Equipment Mfg.	2,400	2,400	2,500	0.0	-4.0
Other Durable Goods	2,300	2,400	2,400	-4.2	-4.2
Nondurable Goods	6,600	6,600	6,500	0.0	1.5
Food Manufacturing	4,700	4,700	4,500	0.0	4.4
Printing & Related Support Activities	700	700	700	0.0	0.0
Other Nondurable Goods	1,200	1,200	1,300	0.0	-7.7
SERVICE-PROVIDING INDUSTRIES	226,700	225,000	221,300	0.8	2.4
<i>Trade, Transportation, & Utilities</i>	54,000	53,400	53,700	1.1	0.6
Trade	45,600	45,100	45,900	1.1	-0.7
Wholesale Trade	12,800	12,600	12,500	1.6	2.4
Wholesalers, Durable Goods	7,400	7,300	7,100	1.4	4.2
Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	4,000	4,000	3,800	0.0	5.3
Retail Trade	32,800	32,500	33,400	0.9	-1.8
Food & Beverage Stores	4,300	4,300	4,400	0.0	-2.3
General Merchandise Stores	7,000	7,000	7,000	0.0	0.0
All Other Retail Trade	21,500	21,200	22,000	1.4	-2.3
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	8,400	8,300	7,800	1.2	7.7
Utilities	700	700	600	0.0	16.7
Transportation & Warehousing	7,700	7,600	7,200	1.3	6.9
<i>Information</i>	5,000	4,900	4,600	2.0	8.7
Telecommunications	1,300	1,300	1,400	0.0	-7.1
<i>Financial Activities</i>	14,100	14,200	14,400	-0.7	-2.1
Finance & Insurance	10,200	10,300	10,100	-1.0	1.0
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	3,900	3,900	4,300	0.0	-9.3
<i>Professional & Business Services</i>	40,900	40,600	40,800	0.7	0.2
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	13,600	13,800	12,400	-1.4	9.7
Management of Companies & Ent.	5,700	5,700	5,700	0.0	0.0
Administrative & Support & Waste Mgmt.	21,600	21,100	22,700	2.4	-4.8
<i>Educational & Health Services</i>	34,700	34,700	33,000	0.0	5.2
Educational Services	3,100	3,100	2,800	0.0	10.7
Health Care & Social Assistance	31,600	31,600	30,200	0.0	4.6
Hospitals	10,100	10,100	9,600	0.0	5.2
<i>Leisure & Hospitality</i>	24,700	24,100	25,500	2.5	-3.1
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	2,800	2,500	3,500	12.0	-20.0
Accommodation & Food Services	21,900	21,600	22,000	1.4	-0.5
Accommodation	2,500	2,300	2,400	8.7	4.2
Food Services & Drinking Places	19,400	19,300	19,600	0.5	-1.0
<i>Other Services</i>	8,300	8,300	7,000	0.0	18.6
<i>Total Government</i>	45,000	44,800	42,300	0.4	6.4
Federal Government	6,100	6,100	5,900	0.0	3.4
State & Local Government	38,900	38,700	36,400	0.5	6.9
State Government	14,400	14,300	13,800	0.7	4.3
State Government Education	5,000	4,900	4,800	2.0	4.2
State Government Administration	9,400	9,400	9,000	0.0	4.4
Local Government	24,500	24,400	22,600	0.4	8.4
Local Government Education	15,400	15,200	14,100	1.3	9.2
Local Government Administration	9,100	9,200	8,500	-1.1	7.1

* Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month.

South Central Idaho Data

Twin Falls-Jerome MicSA Labor Force & Employment — Twin Falls and Jerome counties

				% Change From	
	May 2008*	Apr 2007	May 2007	Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	48,750	49,000	49,000	-0.5	-0.5
Unemployment	1,340	1,110	1,170	20.7	14.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.8	2.3	2.4		
Total Employment	47,410	47,890	47,830	-1.0	-0.9
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	48,170	47,910	48,360	0.5	-0.4
Unemployment	1,120	1,220	900	-8.2	24.4
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.3	2.6	1.9		
Total Employment	47,050	46,690	47,460	0.8	-0.9
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	40,080	39,800	39,610	0.7	1.2
<i>Goods-Providing Industries</i>	7,260	7,070	7,000	2.7	3.7
Natural Resources & Mining	60	60	60	0.0	0.0
Construction	2,490	2,420	2,400	2.9	3.8
Manufacturing	4,710	4,590	4,540	2.6	3.7
Food Manufacturing	2,590	2,490	2,460	4.0	5.3
Other Manufacturing	2,120	2,100	2,080	1.0	1.9
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	32,820	32,730	32,610	0.3	0.6
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	10,010	10,130	9,860	-1.2	1.5
Wholesale Trade	2,030	2,030	1,970	0.0	3.0
Retail Trade	5,670	5,750	5,790	-1.4	-2.1
Utilities	180	180	180	0.0	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	2,130	2,170	1,920	-1.8	10.9
Information	680	670	680	1.5	0.0
Financial Activities	1,670	1,670	1,760	0.0	-5.1
Professional & Business Services	4,560	4,310	4,830	5.8	-5.6
Educational & Health Services	5,420	5,380	5,110	0.7	6.1
Leisure & Hospitality	3,430	3,320	3,260	3.3	5.2
Other Services	1,300	1,410	1,460	-7.8	-11.0
Government Education	3,360	3,490	3,240	-3.7	3.7
Government Administration	2,390	2,350	2,410	1.7	-0.8

*Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month.

Southeastern Idaho Data

Pocatello MSA Labor Force & Employment Bannock and Power counties

	May 2008*	Apr 2008	May 2007	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	42,500	42,170	41,520	0.8	2.4
Unemployment	1,550	1,280	1,250	21.1	24.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.6	3.0	3.0		
Total Employment	40,950	40,890	40,270	0.1	1.7
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	43,660	43,250	42,620	0.9	2.4
Unemployment	1,260	1,360	930	-7.4	35.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.9	3.1	2.2		
Total Employment	42,400	41,890	41,690	1.2	1.7
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	39,390	38,820	39,390	1.5	0.0
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	5,620	5,570	5,570	0.9	0.9
Natural Resources & Mining	30	30	20	0.0	50.0
Construction	1,960	1,860	2,070	5.4	-5.3
Manufacturing	3,630	3,680	3,480	-1.4	4.3
Food Manufacturing	1,370	1,410	1,350	-2.8	1.5
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	190	190	170	0.0	11.8
Machinery Manufacturing	100	100	320	0.0	-68.8
Other Manufacturing	1,970	1,980	1,640	-0.5	20.1
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	33,770	33,250	33,820	1.6	-0.1
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	7,870	7,710	7,260	2.1	8.4
Wholesale Trade	1,330	1,320	1,110	0.8	19.8
Retail Trade	5,180	5,030	4,610	3.0	12.4
Utilities	40	40	50	0.0	-20.0
Transportation & Warehousing	1,320	1,320	1,490	0.0	-11.4
Information	840	800	820	5.0	2.4
Financial Activities	2,060	2,090	2,120	-1.4	-2.8
Professional & Business Services	5,430	4,660	5,360	16.5	1.3
Educational & Health Services	3,250	3,150	3,340	3.2	-2.7
Leisure & Hospitality	3,460	3,470	3,700	-0.3	-6.5
Other Services	1,110	1,230	1,140	-9.8	-2.6
Government Education	5,750	6,080	5,950	-5.4	-3.4
Government Administration	4,000	4,060	4,130	-1.5	-3.1

*Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month.

East Central Idaho Data

Idaho Falls MSA Labor Force & Employment – Bonneville and Jefferson counties

	May 2008*	Apr 2008	May 2007	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	62,460	61,080	62,120	2.3	0.5
Unemployment	1,490	1,240	1,180	20.2	26.3
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.4%	2.0%	1.9%		
Total Employment	60,970	59,840	60,940	1.9	0.0
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	62,320	60,870	61,950	2.4	0.6
Unemployment	1,210	1,380	880	-12.3	37.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	1.9%	2.3%	1.4%		
Total Employment	61,110	59,490	61,060	2.7	0.1
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	52,460	50,840	51,720	3.2	1.4
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	7,920	7,920	8,430	0.0	-6.0
Construction & Natural Resources	4,250	4,290	4,920	-0.9	-13.6
Manufacturing	3,670	3,630	3,510	1.1	4.6
Food Manufacturing	920	920	1,030	0.0	-10.7
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	270	270	290	0.0	-6.9
Machinery Manufacturing	170	180	170	-5.6	0.0
Other Manufacturing	2,310	2,260	2,020	2.2	14.4
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	44,540	42,920	43,290	3.8	2.9
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	13,950	12,760	13,080	9.3	6.7
Wholesale Trade	3,430	3,310	3,520	3.6	-2.6
Retail Trade	7,620	7,560	7,780	0.8	-2.1
Utilities	60	60	60	0.0	0.0
Transportation	2,840	1,830	1,720	55.2	65.1
Information	1,540	1,200	1,200	28.3	28.3
Financial Activities	2,130	2,160	2,180	-1.4	-2.3
Professional & Business Services	5,540	5,500	5,930	0.7	-6.6
Educational & Health Services	7,320	7,450	7,190	-1.7	1.8
Leisure & Hospitality	4,730	4,850	4,850	-2.5	-2.5
Other Services	2,100	1,870	1,990	12.3	5.5
Government Education	3,880	3,850	3,680	0.8	5.4
Government Administration	3,350	3,280	3,190	2.1	5.0

*Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month.

Glossary of Labor Market Terms

Agriculture Employment: Persons on agriculture payrolls who work or receive pay for any period during the survey week. This includes owners, operators, unpaid family members who work at least 15 hours a week, and hired laborers.

Average Hourly Earnings/Average Weekly Hours: The average total money earnings earned by production or non-supervisory workers for selected industries. The average number of hours worked by production or non-supervisory workers including overtime, paid vacation, and sick leave. The data is collected for the week including the 12th of the month.

Average Weekly Earnings: Average Hourly Earnings multiplied by Average Weekly Hours.

Civilian Labor Force: A count of non-institutional persons 16 years of age and over residing within a specific geographic area, excluding members of armed forces, who are classified as employed, unemployed and seeking employment, or involved in a labor dispute.

Consumer Price Index (CPI): A national index measuring changes over time in the price of a fixed market basket of goods and services. There are two indexes—the All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) represents the buying habits of about 80 percent of the non-institutional population of the United States, and the Urban Wage & Clerical Workers (CPI-W) represents 40 percent of the population.

Covered Employers: Employers who are subject to state and federal Unemployment Insurance laws.

Durable Goods: Also known as “hard goods” because they include items manufactured or provided by wholesalers with a normal life expectancy of three years or more.

Employed: Individuals, 16 years of age or older, who worked at least 1 hour for pay or profit or worked at least 15 unpaid hours in a family business during the week including the 12th day of the month. Individuals are also counted as employed if they had a job but did not work because they were: ill, on vacation, in a labor dispute, prevented from working because of bad weather, or temporarily absent for similar reasons.

Initial Claim: Any notice of unemployment filed to request (1) a determination of entitlement to and eligibility for compensation or (2) a second or subsequent period of unemployment within a benefit year or period of eligibility.

Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA): Combinations of counties in which at least half the residents live in an urban center of 50,000 or more and the rest have significant commuting ties to that central county. The Office of Management and Budget designates the MSAs. Idaho has five MSAs: Boise MSA including Ada, Canyon, Boise, Gem and Owyhee counties; Bonneville MSA including Bonneville and Jefferson counties; Pocatello MSA including Bannock and Power counties; Lewiston MSA including Nez Perce County and Asotin County, Wash.; Coeur d’Alene MSA including Kootenai, Boundary, Bonner, Benewah and Shoshone counties.

Micropolitan Statistical Area (MicSA): Combinations of counties in which at least half the residents live in urban centers totaling at least 10,000—or 5,000 living in a single urban center—and the rest have significant commuting ties to that central county. The Office of Management and Budget designates the MicSAs. Idaho has three MicSAs: Burley MicSA including Cassia and Minidoka counties; Rexburg MicSA including Madison and Fremont counties; Twin Falls MicSA including Twin Falls and Jerome counties.

Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment: Persons on nonfarm establishment payrolls (including employees on paid sick leave, paid holiday, or paid vacation) who work or receive pay for any part of the week including the 12th of the month. It is a count of jobs by place of work. It does not include self-employed, unpaid volunteer or family workers, domestic workers in households, military personnel and persons who are laid off, on leave without pay, or on strike for the entire reference period.

Nondurable Goods: Also known as “soft goods” because they include items manufactured or provided by wholesalers that generally last for only a short period of time (three years or less).

Seasonally Adjusted: Data is seasonally adjusted to remove the impact of regular events that occur at the same time every year such as the effect of cold weather on outdoor activities, the Christmas holiday, or the summer influx of youth into the labor market.

Small Labor Market Areas (SLMA): Combinations of counties with significant ties through commuting patterns but no urban centers with populations of 10,000 or more. The Office of Management and Budget designates the SLMAs. Idaho has two SLMAs: Hailey SLMA including Blaine and Camas counties; Grangeville SLMA including Lewis and Idaho counties.

Unemployed: Those individuals, 16 years of age or older, who do not have a job but are available for work and actively seeking work during the week including the 12th of the month. The only exceptions to these criteria are individuals who are waiting to be recalled from a layoff and individuals waiting to report to a new job within 30 days—these, too, are considered unemployed.

Unemployment Insurance: Unemployment Insurance is a program for the accumulation of funds paid by employers, to be used for the payment of Unemployment Insurance to workers during periods of unemployment which are beyond their control.

Unemployment Rate: The number of persons unemployed expressed as a percentage of the labor force.

Weekly Benefit Amount: The amount payable to a claimant for a compensable week of total unemployment.

Weeks Claimed: The number of weeks that unemployed workers claimed Unemployment Insurance benefits.

Weeks Compensated: The number of weeks for which compensation was actually paid.

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